

The Complete Works of Paulos Mar Gregorios Vol. II

Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios (1922-1996)

Outstanding scholar, theologian, philosopher, polyglot and man of letters, Dr. Paulos Mar Gregorios sought to bring together in a holistic vision, several unrelated disciplines like philosophy, economics, political science, medicine, education, physics and theology.

Born in 1922 at Tripunithura, Kerala, the great scholar-bishop had his earlier stints in his homestate as a journalist and postal service employee. He proceeded to Ethiopia in 1947 accepting the job of a teacher there and in course of time became the Special Secretary to Emperor Haillie Sellasi. He had an exceptional educational career in Yale, Princeton and Oxford Universities. Returning to Kerala, he was ordained as a priest of the Orthodox Church. In 1967 Fr. Paul Verghese became the Principal of the Orthodox Theological Seminary. In 1975 elevated as a bishop, Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios took charge of the Delhi Diocese of the Orthodox Church in July 1975.

Honours came unsought to Mar Gregorios. He became President of the World Council of Churches and the Indian Philosophical Congress. In 1988, he received the Soviet Land Nehru Award. He travelled widely and showed an unusual intellectual courage to explore new paradigms in human thinking. He was visiting professor in several universities like the J. N. U. in New Delhi.

Mar Gregorios has authored more than 50 books. *The Joy of Freedom, Freedom of Man, The Cosmic Man, The Human Presence, Enlightenment East and West, A Light Too Bright* and the spiritual autobiography *Love's Freedom: The Grand Mystery* are some of the most remarkable among these. Hundreds of his articles and lectures have been published in leading newspapers, and international magazines.

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**Gregory of India Study Centre
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Science and Civilisation: The Critical Vision of Paulos Mar Gregorios

Fr. Dr. K. M. George

Metropolitan Paulos Mar Gregorios was the moderator of the famous conference on *Faith, Science and Future* organized by the WCC at the MIT, Boston, USA in 1979. His contribution to the debate between ‘science and religion’ left a deep impression on the elite gathering of some of the best scientists and theologians present there.

Apart from his work associated with the organizing and running of this conference Mar Gregorios had always showed great critical concern for the project of science and secularism. His interest in the nature of science was part of his overriding quest to understand the nature of Reality. He recognized the key role played by science and technology in shaping the category of ‘the secular’ and the nature of Reality as perceived by the secular world view. He sought to examine the roots of this issue in his brilliant works on, ‘Enlightenment East and West’ and other writings. We give below, very briefly, some aspects of the critical position of Mar Gregorios in his own words with respect to the nature of science and its perception of Reality.

Children of Enlightenment:

Mar Gregorios begins to examine the philosophy of modern science with a critical look at the foundations of the Enlightenment, the great “cultural - intellectual process that emerged in Europe in the eighteenth century and is now spreading to the rest of the world.¹ The two central elements of this process were the overthrow of the authority of tradition and the enthronement of critical rationality in its place. Thus the Enlightenment Movement actively promoted the abandoning of socially held dogmas and beliefs in its quest for the rational, the universal and the readily demonstrable.²

The Enlightenment movement represented “the full flowering of Western civilization and its values and orientations.” It is the source of modern western science and technology as well as that of western concept and practice of the secular.

Mar Gregorios thinks that Enlightenment has entered its old age with the consequent loss of physical vigour and an increase in wisdom, especially since the seventies of the 20th century. But the three older children of the movement are alive, though not quite well. The three children are modern science / technology, critical rationality and the democratic institutions of government and decision making. They, thinks Mar Gregorios, are much less dogmatic today than in their earlier phase.³ Consequently, 1) Science does not seem to claim any more that it is the only way to knowledge and that all other knowledge are either false or nonsense. 2) Critical rationality of the individual is not any more absolute. It does not claim to make sense of reality without reference to any tradition or external reality, 3) Democratic institutions do not seem to make any absolute claim that their decisions are the result of a social contract that no one can question.

Critiquing Critical Rationality

“Science and technology, the most treasured product of the European Enlightenment and western civilisation”⁴ has been reinforcing the Enlightenment and vice versa for more than two centuries. Mar Gregorios believes that going beyond the assumptions of Enlightenment requires transcending science and technology. But why should one transcend them? Mar Gregorios, in spite of his criticism of Enlightenment rationality, positively appreciates the affirmation of the human in that great western movement. He also has appreciation for the great achievements of science and technology for the welfare of humanity despite his criticism of the bondage of present scientific enterprise to industrial - political - military vested interests. So why transcend?

Modern science’s claim that we can arrive at *objective truth* by following the scientific method is not substantiated by our scientific experience. The subject - object distinction is essential for scientific method. Although this has produced some “operational truth” within certain limits, the subject-object distinction and the notion of objective truth based on it do not hold good at deeper levels of scientific experiment like for instance, the level of sub-nuclear particle physics. Our traditional con-cepts of truth and knowledge become meaningless

here. Science's critical rationality itself can reveal the irrational and the 'unreason' within Reason at several points.

Invoking philosophers of science and thinkers like Karl Popper and Wesley Salmon, Kuhn and Feyerabend, Heidegger and Heidegger, Mar Gregorios points out that the contemporary science's truth claim is conditioned by cultural, political and social parameters of western civilization, and that other forms and modes of truth and rationality are possible in cultures unaffected by the western mindset. The problem according to Mar Gregorios is that the light of the western Enlightenment has been too bright that it obscures all other lights in the sky and thus positively distorts the world we see in that light.

Dogmas of Science Re-examined

In order to unveil "Reason's Unreason" in the Enlightenment, Mar Gregorios critically reviews ten assumptions of the modern western scientific enterprise and its principle of critical rationality:⁵

1. Naive realism assumes that there are subjects and objects and that the subjects can know the objects as they are. According to this view, what cannot be known is not real or non-existent. Enlightenment rationality has no notion of transcendent knowledge that overcomes the opposition between the knower, the known and the knowledge.

2. Truth is essentially an ongoing quest, and not a concept, idea or proposition as understood in the Enlightenment. Truth is what is, not what is stated. A valid proposition about truth can be a help in the quest, but is itself not the object of the quest.

3. Language is understood as the primary and the most important means of communication. However, any absolutisation of the linguistic or literary communication as the only means of communicating truth is to be questioned. Non-verbal forms of conveying truth is as important as the linguistic one.

Enlightenment has overplayed the roles of language and conscious mind. Symbol, myth and ritual have been qualified as irrational by Reason. This is now being thoroughly reviewed.

4. Epistemology or theory of knowledge has been used in modern

scientific disciplines as the guarantor of truthfulness. All forms of “scientific” thinking begins with the critical examination of the questions how do we know? No role of religion or scripture or other external authority is recognised in scientific epistemology. But it has failed to guarantee truth. Except for some operational purposes, the scientific knowledge yielded by epistemology remains unproved.

5. Conscious reason is understood by the Enlightenment as the instrument of knowing. But there are other ways and levels of knowing like the one we receive through meditation.

6. Scientific explanation of anything heavily depends on the principle of causation. But in non-western religions like Buddhism, there are different logical ways of explaining reality without idolising causality. The famous Jungian “synchronicity” is an example from the west itself.

7. Enlightenment considers measurement based science as a way to precise knowledge. But measurement is possible only within a limited time-space entity. Ways of knowing reality that cannot be measured by scientific reason exist in our world.

8. One of the unexamined assumptions of modern science is that the universe exists in itself and by itself. In this assumption, God is an unnecessary hypothesis. But theoretical insights into such things like Multiple Possibility Universe, dark matter and other cosmic phenomena raise a big question here. Non-western and so-called primitive cultures have produced better models to understand the reality of the universe.

9. Time and space are considered as given in our modern science. But the ancient question whether they exist independent of our consciousness or whether they are just products of our mind is gaining currency in scientific circles. European secularism will falter once we recognize in our logic the contingency of the time-space reality and its transcendent dimension.

10. Modern European rationality conceives the linear character of evolution, development and progress as axiomatic. This has absolutised our present western mind-set and the reality it conceives

as final. Alternate visions of change and progress coming from other cultural settings radically question the progressist notion of history and time-space reality.

Mar Gregorios hopefully looks ahead for a new form of civilization radically different from the contemporary dominant western model. The new civilization will mean learning other ways of knowing, related to art and poetry, to intuition and imagination, but perhaps also to faith, hope and love, to rite and ritual, to religion and the mystical experience.”⁶

A major question Mar Gregorios attempts to tackle is whether critical rationality, the essence of Modern European Enlightenment can be conceptually reconciled and related with the transcendental or mystical experience of ‘religious enlightenment’, fundamental to Indian identity.”⁷

This, according to him, is the key to the dialogue between science and religion.

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CONTENTS

Science and Civilisation:

The Critical Vision of Paulos Mar Gregorios

Fr. Dr. K. M. George	5
1 The Dialogue of the Spirit	12
2 A Panchsheel for Religions	20
3 Certainty and the Secular	24
4 The Element of Modernity in Modern Philosophy: An Epistemological Analysis	36
5 Take A Look At Our World	45
6 Towards A New Enlightenment	68
7 The Coming Great Civilisation Shift	86
8 Education for a New Civilisation in the New Millennium	100
9 A Perception on myself	113
10 The Rishikesh appeal To All Nations and Peoples of the World	120
11 Reshaping Health Care	128

Appendix

The Works of Paulos Mar Gregorios	147
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1

The Dialogue of the Spirit

Often, what happens as 'religious dialogue' is not dialogue, it seems to me, for two reasons. First, we are not really speaking to each other as religious communities, but addressing the public expressing sentiments which seek to continue a measure of self justification of our own religious positions with an equal measure of politeness and courtesy to other religions. That, of course, is useful, especially to reduce tensions between religious communities - a desperate need in India today. But dialogue is speaking to each other, not a common addressing of the public.

Secondly, dialogue is a process in which people seek to transcend the boundaries of their own limited understanding of reality in order to become more open to the truth through listening to, and conversing with one's dialogue partners. In many dialogues, there is no conversation, no real listening, no genuine opening up of one's own identity to be transformed by the other in a relationship of mutual love and sharing.

Talking about dialogue, it is generally recognized now-a-days that there are three different levels of dialogue - we will call them practical level, the theoretical level and the symbolic and ritual level.

At the practical level, Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Jains, Sikhs, Jews and Parsees can confer together on any practical issue- on how to combat the price increase, how to fight against hoarding and black marketing, how to solve the problem in the North East, or how to prevent Communal riots in Aligarh or Moradabad. In such a dialogue at the practical level, there is no need to go to a detailed discussion of our faith and beliefs as Hindus, Muslims, and Christians etc. but can take for granted a common commitment to a principle like peace or justice or human rights or mutual understanding and communal harmony. This is the level of dialogue which many people in the west, as well as Indians trained in the west prefer. This does not involve the violation of one's own privacy; there is no need to go through the

agony of exposing one's faith and convictions to another; there is no need for abstract metaphysical or theological discussion. We can all remain at sufficiently exalted and detached "liberal" level, confining our discussion to strategies and programmes. It is clean dialogue, and can sometimes be extremely effective and useful.

Then there is this second level - that of theology or ideology or doctrine or world-view or whatever. Here we concentrate the discussion on concepts - the Hindu view of Man, the Islamic view of Man, the Christian view of Man, or alternatively different views of salvation, cosmology, God etc. Here one touches more deeply on convictions and ways of thinking, and quite quickly come across differences of outlook and understanding, even while finding large areas of agreement. In our own situation in India, the Hindu-Christian dialogue has concentrated its efforts at this level - concepts of incarnation versus Avatar, understanding of History, of Creation, of God-Man or God-World relationships etc. Many philosophical congresses and inter-religious conferences in India when they go beyond the platform variety of dialogue, do go into these intricate conceptional problems, and succeed in bringing out an immense amount of illumination and edification. At this level more patience and sympathy are required than at the practical level. The dialogue partners have to be faithful.

Let us now turn to the third level viz. symbolic and ritual level.

Two Kinds of Symbols

Symbols can be at least at two different levels. The more obvious symbols have a meaning which we can partly translate into rational categories, e.g., the national flag, the olive branch, the dove of peace, etc. These symbols are rooted in history and have some relation to a past historical event of some significance to the people to whom the symbol is meaningful. There are other symbols which border line - they convey more than rationally explicable meaning - the crescent moon and the star, the cross, the hammer and sickle, the Lamb of God, the wheel of prayer and so on. They go beyond the conscious level to meaning levels which cannot be translated exhaustively into concepts. But they too have historical origins which partly explain

their power to communicate meaning. There are other symbols which are of archetypal origin. Archetypes are primordial images in the collective unconscious of a historical- cultural group of people, and usually are not operative at the conscious level. They usually function when the conscious mind is not active, such as in dream, trance or ritually produced ecstasy. In fact, they serve to hide reality from the conscious mind, but at the same time to open reality to the total mind at sub-conscious levels. The archetypes may be drawn from real life like the father image or the mother image or the grandfather image, or they could be drawn from myth and folklore, like angels, demons, fairies, mythical animals or birds and so on. The two different kinds of symbols may therefore be described as those that speak to the conscious mind and those that are capable of reaching the non-conscious levels of our total consciousness. The distinction should not be held in too neat a fashion, for the unconscious or subconscious levels are constantly impinging upon our seemingly rational and self-aware conscious perception. Motivations for conscious action often arise from the unconscious level.

Precisely because the two levels of consciousness cannot be so neatly separated from each other, it is important not to confine inter-religious communication to either of these levels, even in non-verbal and symbolic communication.

Rites and rituals are symbolic corporate actions of a community using both types of symbols. One of the tragedies of Christian worship particularly has been the tendency to regard the liturgy as a set form of words to be repeated by the community. The liturgy is not a form for worship; it is primarily a community act, a corporate symbolic action. Words and symbols form part of the liturgical act, but they do not in any sense exhaust their meaning.

People sometimes ask me if they can come and participate the Indian Orthodox liturgy when I celebrate it. Usually they are people outside the Eastern Orthodox tradition. Politely I would say to them that they of course would be welcome. But I am not sure that one who comes as a spectator can be a real participant in the liturgical act. A liturgical act is one into which one has been initiated and in

which one feels sufficiently at home as not to be under pressure or tension to understand consciously or rationally every symbolic act, gesture or symbol. The function of a liturgy is not to transmit conscious or rational meaning. It is an act of the community in which it communicates to its members meanings at transcendent and unconscious levels. I might explain to you what the censer (by which we communicate both visual and nasal symbols to the participant) and the incense burning in it typify, but until one becomes initiated into that pattern of communicating meaning, it remains a curiosity and sometimes a symbol which arouses hostile reactions in people of the Reformation or secular traditions in the West. If one goes to a typical Tibetan worship service, a Western observer feels that a lot of time is wasted in meaningless and long chants and mantras which could not communicate any meaning to the observer, and therefore presumably none to the Buddhist participant as well. Only the well trained observer would recognise that the chants produce vibrations which produce changes in one's body and mind and unconsciously transform the chanter as well as the chanting community.

A conscious awareness of the unconscious meaning transmitted by a community act of worship may sometimes be counter-productive, for too much arousal of the conscious mind shuts off access to the unconscious and trans-rational levels of our consciousness. That is one reason why initiation and training are of primary importance for participation in a traditional liturgical act. This also explains why newly devised and totally unfamiliar new liturgies may titillate the conscious mind but cannot penetrate to the deeper levels of awareness of the worshipping community. Experimental liturgies are all right for people who have already a traditional liturgy that fulfills their basic needs for meaning and enrichment; they cannot fulfill the needs of a congregation, because the congregation will be required always to exercise its conscious mind in order to participate in a liturgy with which they are unfamiliar. One grows into a liturgical tradition by long practice and one does not always spring surprises on a worshipping community every week. To the outsider as well as to the rationally minded insider it might look like a series of meaningless and repetitive gestures. What may not transmit conscious meaning

can still transmit meaning at a level at which one is not even aware that such meaning is being received. One of the great difficulties of modern man or woman is that one's rational and conscious awareness has become so central and domineering within the consciousness, so that the pose is that one accepts only that which is rationally communicated and rationally assimilated. And yet our civilisation and the business community which dominates and exploits it all the time are fully in possession of so many ways in which they can influence our unconscious and direct our decisions. The more anti-ritual and anti-symbolic we seek to become, the more susceptible we become to these subliminal assaults on our consciousness. It is therefore important for modern men and women to get a new attunedness to the ritual or liturgical mode of meaning-communication that our unconscious will be able to receive the more benign transmissions, and be healed.

Rite and Word

Most anthropologists may not agree, but it seems clear to me that in human evolution, rite is as old as word. Human beings' earliest responses to reality were not only practical and linguistic, but also ritual. Other animals also have their own practical handling of reality (skills, instinctive or acquired), their own rudimentary language, but also rites and rituals more elaborate than that of primitive human beings. From the beginning of humanity, the three always went together, i.e. practical handling of reality, verbal conceptualization and communication, and various ritual expressions of meaning through dance, music, gestures and liturgical actions. In fact all our art forms, whether it be painting or sculpture, music or drama, dance or playing of instruments, all have their origin in the liturgical rite. But the liturgical rite, in so far as it included practical handling of material objects, and all art forms as well as words and language, could be said to have been most characteristic and most complete act of human beings from which life itself was sustained, both for the tribe and for persons and families. None of these basic forms of human expression could be separated into sacred and secular, or holy and profane. Everything was sacred, for the divine pervaded all life and all beings in the world. Gradually human beings have de-divinised all the forms of expression

- skills, language and art, and made these realms secular, or exclusively human. This has been the way alienation from the divine has functioned in human history, and the European Enlightenment of the 18th and 19th centuries was probably the culmination process of alienation and affirmation of the human apart from and independent of the divine. It is also true that individualism comes to full fruition in the context of this alienation, where it is the secularised human person who asserts his non-dependence on God or society.

Conclusion

It is in such a secularistic, humanistic, individualistic human world of alienation that the religions of the world are called upon to carry out their vocation. In all these three processes, i.e., in secularisation, humanism and individualism, there are some positive as well as negative values. Even in the revolt against God and the human person's self-affirmation there are positive values. As in the case of the adolescent human person, there is the need to revolt against one's parents (often), in order to begin to affirm one's own adult identity. There was a need for humanity too to affirm its adult identity, and a temporary revolt against the divine as we had conceived it may have been a healthy move, in so far as the divine was understood in very immature adolescent terms by humanity. The difficulty is that the humanity which has revolted against the divine parent remains woefully adolescent and un-adult or immature. It is here that the religions have a great task in leading humanity back to a mature understanding of and relation with the divine parent. This cannot be a question of simple repentance and faith. The divine parent wants humanity to be mature and free in its relationship as adult son/daughter. A simple repentance and faith may lead humanity back to a childish or adolescent relationship to the divine.

In order to help humanity achieve true maturity and adulthood, the religions of the world themselves have to become more mature and less anti-human, less parochial and chauvinistic, less clerically dominated, less world-denying, less triumphalistic, less male-dominated; this in turn means that religions should turn to each other and also to the secular world in which human beings, both religious and non-religious, live today.

That turning, however, cannot be merely verbal or conceptual. It must be a turning in practical affairs, in thinking and understanding, and also in liturgical incorporation of practical everyday handling of reality, the deepest levels of conceptual understanding and clarification, as well as the forms of art which convey meaning to the deeper levels of human consciousness, through corporate ritual actions.

It is in the context of and for the purpose of redeeming humanity as a whole from its alienation that the religions of the world have to enter into meaningful communication with each other. It is therefore necessary that this inter-religious communication take place at all three levels:

1. Practical matters of concern to humanity like justice and peace, the abolition of poverty and misery, the enhancement of the dignity and freedom of the oppressed, and the improvement of the ecological environment.

2. Conceptual promotion of mutual understanding and respect based on that understanding among religions as well as between religions and the secular world and thirdly religions today themselves are in alienation from the divine and from each other. We can help humanity to overcome its alienation from the divine only in the process of overcoming our own alienation from the divine and from each other as well as from the secular world.

3. At the level of artistic-ritual and liturgical communication.

Therefore inter-religious dialogue will have to attempt more than merely participating in each other's worship and liturgical ritual. We have to help each other in renewing our liturgical traditions and making them more capable of communicating trans-conceptual meaning, both to each other and to the secular world, of course primarily to the members of the liturgical community itself, but secondarily also to others.

The greatest and most communicative of all symbols created is of course humanity itself, created as the icon of God, as God's manifest presence. This humanity, both as persons and as communities, when filled with divine love, becomes easily the most significant in all

communication. When humanity, i.e., persons and communities, become love-filled, spirit-empowered, and truly enlightened at conscious and trans-conscious levels, then communication takes place almost spontaneously. But even then, the meaning of human existence is conveyed more effectively when that spontaneous communication embraces all three levels, the practical, the conceptual and the liturgical-ritual-artistic.

Beyond all these there is the communication in the most profound silence, about which it seems better to keep silent.

A Panchsheel for Religions

Religious differences have been a recurring pretext for wars through recorded history. Often, the root cause of these wars has plainly been economic while the immediate impulse for them came easily from a threat to religious identity. Religion is a deeply moving source of self-identity and group passions can be aroused most speedily by stirring up religious feelings. Which, for instance, was why a known atheist like Stalin decided, in the fight during the early Forties against the forces of Hitler, to appeal to the religious sentiments of the Soviet people, recalling their religious history, in his effort to rouse their patriotism and to steel their resolve to resist aggression.

But precisely because religion is a source and symbol of group identity, economic conflicts often take the form of a religious struggle. The clearest examples of this today are the Arab-Jewish confrontation and the fight in Northern Ireland between Catholics and Protestants. One group holds that the other is dominating and exploiting them.

The same is true of the Hindu-Muslim quarrels on our own sub-continent. It is the fear of being economically deprived and politically cheated that leads to community conflicts, communal riots and even civil war.

Normally, religion is a noble sentiment, an inspiring source of heroic sacrifice, of self-denial and of serving others, of mercy, peace and goodness. Yet it can be turned quickly into hatred, fanaticism and the most irrational kind of cruelty. This happens because people become intemperate and brutal in their attempt to demonstrate their strident loyalty to their own community or religious denomination.

We in India have thus to be watchful that our deep religious sentiments are not transformed into hatred and vengeance. For, we have not only the Hindu-Muslim rivalry, but also conflicts between Hindus and Tribals, between Hindus and Christians, and so on. Most of these rivalries feed on misunderstandings, willful distortions of one group by another, and, for too often, lack of mutual knowledge and understandings.

The time is now for the various religious communities to practise some ground rules for peaceful coexistence, a kind of Panchsheel for religions. These principles should not only be proclaimed but also be inculcated continuously by the leaders in their followers.

I propose five simple principles as a basis for further deliberation by a representative group of religious leaders and thinkers. These are *mutual respect, non-discrimination, dialogue, resolution of conflicts by peaceful means, and co-operation in the service of humanity*.

Mutual respect between religions can be engendered by teaching each person to respect other religions as well as his own, never to speak hatefully of them and to learn what is best in each religion. This programme must be introduced in our schools and colleges, as well as into religious teaching schemes. It could also be advanced through public gatherings organised, say once a year, by all the religions together and addressed by their leaders.

Non-discrimination: It is a principle of our secular democracy that no man or woman shall be discriminated against because of his or her religion. This should apply not only to the rights of Harijans but also to those of the adherents of any religion. The minorities of this country fear, rightly or wrongly, that they are often kept out of key posts, or even common jobs, because of their religion. There should be a programme, overseen by a Lokpal, to look into allegations of this kind and to give unbiased verdicts. Natural such a Lokpal would have to be a group of distinguished person representing the various religions.

The principle of non-discrimination would naturally have to apply also to legislation. For example, the Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Bill (originally called Freedom of indigenous Religion Bill) sought to discriminate between Hinduism and Sikhism as Indian-born religions on the one hand, and other religions like Islam, Christianity, and Judaism as imported religions on the other. If this principle were carried to its logical conclusion, no religion could go beyond its own national frontiers - including Hinduism. Similarly, the O.P. Tyagi Bill attempts to discriminate against certain religions by

subtle devices like defining the “use of force” (which is forbidden for religious conversions) as use or threat to use force, including the threat of divine retribution. True, some West Asian religions do teach about God’s divine judgement, but a secular state cannot legislate against such religions. Hinduism too has the doctrine of *Karma* which is a sort of divine retribution, and therefore to preach about *Karma* would be a violation of the Tyagi Bill’s provisions. The principle of non-discrimination demands total Vigilance.

Dialogue or Learning from Each Other: All religions have a tendency to feel self-sufficient. People often think that all that needs to be known in terms of religion is already provided in the Scriptures and other writings of one’s own religion. Experience has shown that when one sets out to learn deeply from other religions, one’s understandings of one’s own religion is transformed and deepened. We need therefore to find ways in which at least the leaders and thinkers of each religion are exposed at depth to the teachings of other religions. It is at this level that dialogue between the various religions becomes essential, especially in the Indian context. One could also organise brief courses in our social and academic institutions where the best teachers of all religions talk to the same group of people.

Resolving Conflicts by Peaceful Means: There should be a national network of religious leaders committed to the ideal of religious and communal harmony, who will be vigilant about communal tensions in various parts of the country. They should take the initiative to engineer a meeting of the religious leaders of the locality as soon as tensions are spotted, in order to prevent a conflict from breaking out. Such panels could be organised on a district basis and closely associated with the Zila Parishad or the district administration. These could also help settle conflicts arising within just one religious group as well as conflicts between different religious groups.

These panels would work on a voluntary basis without remuneration, but will be given the necessary facilities and assistance by the district authorities including the police. Early detection of tension is the essence of this programme. But if the district panel is of

sufficiently high calibre it can help in the resolution of long standing conflicts as well.

Inter-religious Cooperation in Service to Community: All religions believe in selfless service to the needy. Why can't we then move forward to some measure of cooperation in this regard? For example, a few schools, hospitals, and other institutions of service to humanity can be jointly run by different religious groups. Why can't we put our resources together into some village development project? Ways and means for joint service are worth exploring. It will be recalled that for the Andhra Cyclone Relief or Bengal Flood Relief, various religions acted independently and somewhat competitively. Would it not have been an enduring witness to communal harmony, if we could have had at least a few projects of house-building or relief operations on a cooperative inter-religious basis?

These five principles may need to be supplemented or revised. In any case it will be good to make a start by calling together a meeting of religious leaders to explore possibilities of formulating principles and to begin building our national defences against communal disharmony.

(The Star of the East, Vol. 1, No. 2, April, pp. 29-32)

3

Certainty and the Secular which do we want - philosophy grounded in the subjective consciousness or on objective social analysis?

If you ask a Western philosopher: “What is the task of philosophy?” one can expect today two types of answers:

(a) Philosophy is “the analysis and criticism of received social, scientific and religious statements, and the reconstruction of principles and categories indispensable to correct theories or sound policies of action.”¹

(b) Philosophy is the integrating vision of reality and its coherent interpretation.

The latter, which is also generally the Indian view, is however becoming a view very difficult to sustain for three reasons:

(1) Such an undertaking requires the integration of all available knowledge; the expansion of human knowledge in the present century has been so vast as to preclude the possibility of any one mind, even with the aid of a most sophisticated computer and information retrieval system, integrating it all into a coherent pattern;

(2) Even if one mind could coherently comprehend all knowledge, the knowledge by itself is not capable of yielding categories and principles by which to integrate it and extract there from the meaning of the whole.

(3) Modern science is far from sanguine about the objective givenness of the world. It was only classical physics that could think of ‘Nature’ as a deterministic system subsumable under deterministic laws. Quantum Physics does not see causality and determinism as universal; the universe is a system indeed; but only partly determined; in large part it is a system of possibilities, with a high degree of indeterminacy.

Does this situation lead inevitably to a total abandonment of the larger philosophical enterprise in the west? Not really, certainly even today the west is more productive than the East in generating new philosophies. But an examination of these new systems or types of philosophy will reveal some clear differences between the philosophical enterprises as we understand it in east and as they conceive it in the west.

If one takes a survey of western philosophy today, the only current speculative systems we can find are the closely inter-related systems of Bergson in France and Whitehead in the U.S.A. These two ways of philosophising fall within the category of modern philosophy only in the sense that they pay a great deal of attention to modern scientific and cultural data. But they are different from other systems of philosophy in their boldness in using the speculative method which is practically forbidden by the scientific tempo of the age. This was certainly one reason why the acutely empiricist outlook of Anglo-Saxon philosophy has chosen to ignore both Bergson and Whitehead. We will come back to some comments on their philosophy later on, along with some others of a similar kind. Of course NeoThomism remains an openly religious philosophical system.

The prevailing schools of philosophy in the West other than, NeoThomism, Bergson and Whitehead are of five types.

- a) Philosophies which may be broadly classified as Existential, e.g., Heidegger, Sartre, Marcel, Jaspers.
- b) Phenomenological systems - e.g., Husserl, Meinong, Merleau-Ponty, Brentano.
- c) Linguistic analysis: Moore, Wittgenstein, Ayer, Carnap, Warnock, Urmson, Austin and so on.
- d) Structuralism: Levi-Strauss, Lucien Goldman, Roland Barthes, etc.

e) Marxism: This is still vital and growing, despite Western affirmations to the contrary, both in Western Europe and in the socialist countries.

This does not take into account more restricted philosophical

endeavours like new developments in the Philosophy of Science, the Philosophy of Language, Hermeneutics, or Aesthetics. Nor does it do justice to the largely inarticulate philosophy of Western civilization which has its roots in Pragmatism and Utilitarianism. Perhaps one should also mention among current Western philosophical systems the whole new search for a 'Style of Life' and a 'Quality of Life', connected with the environmental crisis now facing the industrialized societies.

What impresses one when one looks at almost all of these systems or ways of philosophizing is the attention and respect they pay to the scientific method and to the content of scientific knowledge. One could almost say that the most decisive element in modern philosophy is its attitude towards modern science in both method and content. And an examination of the roots of this attitude may prove illuminating.

The Quest for Certainty

The Western tradition developed fairly early - during that Golden Age of the Spirit which gave birth to Buddha as well as the Vedas and Upanishads, the Pre-Socratics as well as Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and Plotinus, Lao-tsu, the West Asian sages like Moses and Elijah, Christ and Mohammed, and many unsung and unhonoured spiritual heroes of all climes and cultures.

If Tagore was right in that beautiful insight,² it was the same Indo-Aryan peoples who developed the unitive-synthetic vision of the Indian sages and the descriptive analytic systems of ancient Greece. As the ancestors of the Indo-European peoples came down from the heights of the Caucasus, those that crossed the Indus faced the vast woodlands of *Aryavarta* and sought to *synthesize* the spreading complex in which they could roam and wander freely; those that went to the small and crowded Greek peninsulas had to analyse, measure and chart their world, to build city-states. Thus they developed two different attitudes, the one primarily unitive, the other, primarily analytical.

But not exclusively. Our Indian philosophers were just as keenly analytical in their thought as any sophisticated western mind. One cannot accuse a Sankara or a Panini of simpleness or muddle-

headedness. All our *Lokacharyas* were also analytical minds, second to none in the world in the clarity and precision of their conception and articulation as well as in their category structure.

And how can we call either Socrates or Plato an exclusively analytical mind? Certainly Plotinus was highly synthetic and unitive as any Oriental!

None of us are really exclusively one or the other. One of the most fascinating fields of research in that analytically inclined Western world is Brain Research. And there we have some interesting discoveries which have significance for philosophy itself.

While it may not be pertinent here to give a full account of this new field of research,³ it is useful to point to just one aspect of it.

The brief reference here is mainly to a new field of research in Biology called Hemispheric Asymmetry in Human Brain Function. The scientific material is in the *Bulletin of the Los Angeles Neurological Societies* (BLANS). No. 34 of 1969, which gives the third of a series of articles - this one called "The Other Side of the Brain III, the Corpus Callosum and Creativity" by J. E. Bogen and G. M. Bogen. A more comprehensive presentation is in Robert E. Ornstein (Ed), *The Nature of the Human Consciousness*.⁴

The main point is that biological experiments have now revealed a basic asymmetry of function between the two inter-connected hemispheres of the human brain controlling cerebral cortical function. One (the right) is more intuitive, unitive, and the other (the left) is more analytical. The right hemisphere perceives wholes, while the left registers details, pursuing linear analytic rationality.⁵ This corresponds in some ways to the two halves of the Indo-Aryan migration – the Athenian and the Bharatiya.

Perhaps the Athenian, the analytic-discursive, line has been overdeveloped, and human beings trained in the Western system of education, (which I understand is followed in this institution as well, despite its being a centre of *Bharatiya* culture), develop one side (the left) of the brain in an unbalanced way. How will we get the other side of the brain, the right side which is a dreamer, a perceiver,

a seer of visions, with the capacity to see wholes rather than detailed parts, to catch up with the left side, so that our human vision is more truly human?

The two Poles of Knowledge - the Subjective and the Objective

In any case, the west has gone far on the analytic path, practically neglecting the holistic and the intuitive-synthetic. And as they have proceeded further on that road, they became feebler and feebler in their capacity to have holistic visions. And as they progressively lost sight of the transcendent in which this world is grounded, they had to ground their certainty in an analysis of either the ‘objective world’ given to consciousness, or of the ‘subjective world’ of consciousness itself.

One can see almost all modern Western philosophical systems as attempts to find certainty either through systematic, careful, detailed analysis of the subjective consciousness (Phenomenology) or of a more feeling-and-will generated subjective determination (Existentialism) on the one hand, or on the other a meticulous analysis of some part of external reality (in this case, human language, as in Analytical Philosophies) or of the whole of external reality (modern Structuralism, which will be discussed later, and Marxism).

Thus we see five out of the eight different dynamic systems of modern Western philosophy trying to ground themselves in either subjective consciousness (Existentialism and Phenomenology) or in an analysis of external reality (Linguistic Analysis, Structuralism, and Marxism). The three other systems which are more speculative, i.e., NeoThomism, Whiteheadian Process philosophy and Bergsonian or Teilhardian Duration philosophies are different from these, precisely in terms of a heavier dependence on a religious tradition.⁶

The Three Pramanas

In India traditionally we have always held the *pramanas* to be three, *Pratyaksha*, *Anumana* and *Agama* or *Sabda*. In fact, the same three principles are acknowledged also in European Medieval Scholastic Philosophy, though not quite clearly enumerated as three.

These three *pramanas* or principles corresponded also to the three fundamental realities to be known - the world was intuited as *pratyaksha*, the self supplies the *anumana* and God or *Easwara* or *Brahman* is known by *Agama* or *Sabda*.

Just as there is an ascending hierarchy of being between world, humanity and God, the three *pramanas* also have an ascending order of superiority, *Pratyaksha* comes from the senses, *anumana* coming from reason is above that, and *agama* or *Sabda* comes above all.

This hierarchy of principles was often used by religious leadership to affirm their own superiority since they are the custodians of the highest principle, namely scripture and tradition. This leads quite often to society dominated socially and economically also by the priestly class as happened in Medieval Europe, as well as in India during certain periods of our history.

The Rise of Secularism

France is one place where we can observe the transition to the present situation most perceptibly. 1789 made a difference to world history, but the French development is a clear paradigm of what happened to the whole European quest for intellectual certainty.

The situation before 1789 was one of strict ecclesiastical control of both institutions and thought patterns. As Alex Vidler of Cambridge put it:

“The clergy were a privileged class. The Catholic Church had no rivals, for since the revocation of the Edict of Nantes, Catholics alone had the right of citizenship. The clergy had their own courts, and marriage was under ecclesiastical control. The Church possessed immense wealth and property, which was exempt from taxation. It had a monopoly of education and care of the sick.”⁷

The Church thus controlled both philosophy and Science as also health, education and welfare. Remember this was the Age of Reason, but the Church had sought to control that Reason, despite the Encyclopaedists and Voltaire and Rousseau who all mocked the church.

So when that authority structure finally collapsed with the French Revolution, and after the brief Napoleonic inter-regnum, the Third Estate, the bourgeoisie, i.e., the professionals, commercial interests and bankers, took over power from the previous alliance of clergy and nobility, and both thought and institutions were secularized. European educational, sanitary, economic and political institutions were developed in this context by a basically anti-religious bourgeoisie, and it is this that we have also inherited through the British in India.

Science and Technology as we now have it, developed in this anti-clerical, anti-religious milieu and bear its marks. They deal with only two realities - Man and World, and use only two *Pramanas*, *Pratyaksha* and *Anumana*. The missing reality is God, which was till then regarded as basic to the other two realities. But now it became an unnecessary hypothesis in the Laplacean sense. You could make sense of reality without dealing with something called God or using a *pramana* such as Revelation or Tradition or *agama* or *Sabda*.

Certainty without Revelation

Having inherited such a civilization which was dichotomous rather than trichotomous in both the number of aspects of reality and in the number of principles to be used, it was clear that certainty could no longer come from religious faith. The only methods of seeking certainty were (a) to make a meticulous analysis of the knowing process and to ground certainty in the conscientious use of the process or method or (b) ground all certainty in strict correlation with the external world, empirically given. This is the ground of certainty in Science and Technology gives the pragmatic proof of certainty to the discoveries and to the conclusions of Science.

Western Philosophy has thus only two options. If dogma and metaphysics are ruled out, if theology and tradition are relegated to the status of an archaic interest, what is left is a certainty grounded in an analysis of the individual consciousness and its knowing process, and or in a meticulous analysis of the external world or some manageable part of it.

In Existentialism, the attempt was to set aside altogether the

fundamental questions about objective reality as a whole, and to be concerned only about the experiencing subject. Not only was there a retreat from knowledge of the external world, but even from knowledge itself, concentrating more on feeling and will than on Intellect.

This was understandable in the days of the French Resistance against occupying Nazi troops. When you are put in jail or in a concentration camp, and can be shot or gassed today or tomorrow or ten days hence or not killed at all, there is no use looking for certainty anywhere in the external world, since that world is totally unpredictable, depending only on the caprices of the Nazi officer commanding the prison or camp. The only way was to find certainty by accepting the facts of death and meaninglessness, and make a resolution within the subjective will and feeling not to break down in face of the uncertainty of the external world.

Existentialism arises and becomes popular in a context where the preceding unity and harmony of the external world have been suddenly lost, where no certainty can be found in the everyday world from which one is deeply alienated. The aim is liberation from attachment to and dependence on that external world, by grounding one's certainty in the decisions of the subjective ego, irrespective of what goes on in the outside world.

That situation, where the Danish Kierkegaard of a century before was miraculously restored, where an Orthodox Berdyaev and a Catholic Marcel could join hands with an unbelieving Sartre to create a movement of de-alienation called Existentialism, is now past in France. They have now arrived at some stability in the external world, an economic stability which they did not have in the immediate postwar Europe; stability through economic progress with the aid of science, technology and a little skillful exploitation of the ex-colonies of Africa. In this situation of new-found socio-economic stability, one can afford to go beyond the extreme individualism of Existentialism, and try to create a new philosophy like Structuralism. Man is not "condemned" to an "absolute freedom." Man need not be afraid of the reflective ego with its *cogito* as Sartre was, and need not try to

go into the pre-reflective *cogito* of direct awareness. One can now afford to know and control external reality which provides sustenance. That is what Science and Technology are there for. The reflective posture of the social scientist and the anthropologist, the rational mind which organises and computes, is not so alienating as one thought. Even if they alienate, they bring affluence, and that is all right.

But is it not too much of a jump, from the “absolute freedom” of Existentialism, to the almost absolute determinism of Structuralism, where the effort is meticulously and carefully to analyse and label the various components of reality in their identity and in their structural relations, and to put them together into a unitary structure? Is not the social scientist and the structuralist treating human society as a colony of ants or bees?

Not at all, says the structural-anthropological philosopher. But he does not believe that total meaninglessness is the structure of reality, as the Existentialists seem to affirm. There is meaning, and if there were no meaning at all, there would not be language. There is the word, the sign and the symbol. They mean something. They point to realities beyond themselves. The signified and the signifying are not the same thing. There is a science called “Semeiology” or the discourse about meanings. Hence Levi-Strauss’s words in the closing chapter of *Structural Anthropology*,⁸ that Anthropology aims to be a semeiological science and takes as a guiding principle that of ‘meaning’.” Structure does not annihilate freedom any more than words and their precise meanings and grammar annihilate freedom in language.

The reality of life is social and not merely individual. It is objectively structured and not merely subjective. The freedom of the individual cannot be absolute. It receives shape and meaning through structure and form. Freedom and structure are not two realities, but different aspects of one coherent pattern. In fact structure itself is a product of freedom, because it is a creation of the human spirit in seeking to comprehend reality as an ordered whole

The fight in France today is a three-cornered one – Existentialists trying to hold a line against sweeping anti-individualist currents,

Marxists coming back with various forms of Marxism (Russians would call nearly all of them Revisionists) and Structuralists taking bits of Existentialist activism and Marxist class thinking and putting a structural frame on them to make their philosophy the last word.

The great Structuralists are three - Claude Levi-Strauss (born 1908), Lucien Goldmann (born 1913) and Roland Barthes (born 1915) - all past 60 today. The three have different backgrounds and interests. Levi-Strauss is a cultural anthropologist; Goldmann is a literary critic and sociologist; Barthes is a 'semeiologist', i.e., a scientist who deals with signs and their meanings.

Their common effort is to create a 'poetic cosmography' a world which is faithful to the details of reality and at the same time vibrant and dynamic in its structure; Structure is what humanity contributes to reality. It is wrong to bracket Structuralism with political conservatism or philosophical scientism. It is related to the computer culture and the modern mathematics of *systems analysis* but not a wooden computerized understanding of social reality. It is an ambitious appeal to humanity to give meaning to social existence by dreaming up the right kind of structure.

It is interesting to consider the fact the Structuralism has the same ancestry as Linguistic Analysis. Both go back to the Prague Circle (formed March 1925) which was the parent of the Vienna Circle which on English soil gave birth to Linguistic Analysis

Sartre has today largely abandoned his existentialism and has become more out-and-out Marxist, fighting Structuralism with Marxist Dialectical Reason. But neutral experts like Jean Piaget have certified that the differences between Marxist constructionism-historicism and the Structuralist quest to construct a structure which helps to remake historical society, are not so great. In any case, the anti-rational, purely subjectivist Existentialism is now on the wane. French philosophy is moving away from the Cartesian kind of solipsism to a vision of reality grounded in an objective social analysis of the external world, structurally and historically conceived.

This swing of the pendulum between individual consciousness on the one hand and meticulously analysed perception of social reality

on the other seems to indicate the only two options for a philosophical approach that feels with only two aspects of reality, Man and World, and uses only two principles “sense-experience and reason. All the five approaches “phenomenology and existentialism on the one hand, and Linguistic Analysis, Marxism and Structuralism on the other suffer from this limitation of subject-matter and method.

Bergson and Whitehead, as I have stated, represent a different line. They speculate on the basis of *Sabda-pramana*, but do not acknowledge the *pramana*. They do not ground their certainty either in the subjective consciousness or in the rational analysis of the external world. Bergson, if anything, is anti-positivistic. Neither did he like Kant very much.⁹ Kant was again the father of this method of seeking to ground certainty in an analysis of the knowing process (*Critique of Pure Reason*). Neither did Bergson care for the Evolutionary Method of Spencer, which sought to find Spirit in Nature, but without a notion of time which was an essential aspect of nature. It is this time, which we experience as duration (*duree*), which constitutes the experience of the Absolute *sub specie durationis*. Positivism eliminates time and therefore the Absolute. To recover time by the ‘simple act’ of experiencing is already to go beyond the relative to the absolute. But the Catholic Bergson has an Oriental streak in him, drawn from Plotinus the Neo-Platonist and the Christian Fathers. So has the Anglican Whitehead; and precisely for this reason their philosophies came in conflict with the scientific tempo which wants to eliminate both the Absolute and the *Agama* or Tradition.

Teilhard de Chardin is on the same line as Bergson and Whitehead, only more explicit in affirming his dependence on the Christian tradition. And for that reason the Empiricist-rationalist tradition of the Anglo-Saxon and French world pay but scant attention to any of them.

So the quest continues - to ground certainty in either the subjective consciousness or on objective social analysis. But uncertainty gnaws at the entrails of Western man. The taboo against asking the fundamental questions about Reality, which is the question about its ground and source, will remain operative even in the university so long as the authority of Tradition or Revelation remains unrecognized

and has to be smuggled into philosophy secretly. There is neither being nor knowledge except from the ground of all being and all knowledge. But a secular atmosphere even in a university founded with generous assistance from religious institutions, precludes the possibility of serious research into the ground of being or the nature of revealed knowledge. This secular atmosphere which once provided the freedom for knowledge to emerge from the tutelage of religion, becomes today an oppressive element both in society and in the university. This oppression has yet to develop to the point where science and Technology as well as the university as an institution can be enlisted in the struggle for release from that oppression.

1. This particular definition is taken from Andrew J. Reck, "Wilmon Shelon's Philosophy of Philosophy" in *Tulane Studies in Philosophy*, Vol. VII, on the *Nature of the Philosophical Enterprise*, Tulane University, New Orleans, 1958, p. 111.

2. R. Tagore, *Sadhana: The Realisation of Life*, Macmillan, 1913, pp. 3 ff.

3. For such a survey I recommend Marilyn Ferguson, *The Brain Revolution, The Frontiers of Alba Research*, Bantam Books, New York, 1975. The Viking press, 1973. The particular aspect I discuss here, however, is not in that book.

4. New York, The Viking Press, 1973.

5. For a fuller description see Solomon Katz, "Toward a New Science of Humanity" in *Zygon*, Vol. 10, No. 1 (March 1975), pp. 12-31.

6. This dependence is less obvious in both Whitehead and Bergson, compared to Teilhard de Chardin. But the dependence in both cases is not difficult to establish.

7. Alex R. Vidler *The Church in an Age of Revolution*, Pelican, 1961, p. 12.

8. New York, Basic Books, 1963.

9. Madeleine Barthelemy-Madaule, Bergson, *Adversaire de Kant*, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris, 1966.

(1978)

The Element of Modernity in Modern Philosophy: An Epistemological Analysis

“Modern Philosophy” is a term widely used, but seldom with any precision of meaning. In one sense it could be said that the absence of reference to religious authority constitutes modernity. But such a definition cannot be sustained, both because in the two acknowledged fathers of modern philosophy, Rene Descartes and Immanuel Kant, one finds various reference to religious authority, and because there have been many others in the history of universal philosophy before the modern period who have philosophized without appeal to religious authority.

Particularly in Descartes, one sees his whole literary activity permeated with an anxious desire not to give offense to traditional religion. Leibnitz tried actually to correlate his metaphysics carefully with the religious tradition. Spinoza, precisely because he radically differed in his conception of God from the traditional notion, got into serious trouble with religious authorities.

One could try another track - that of substance and function. Is it not true that this is what characterizes modern philosophy - that it is concerned more with function than with substance? The difficulty is that we are not as sure of that distinction as we once were.

Substance has always remained a dubitable philosophical concept, long before modern philosophy. It has already been argued, but by 4th century (AD) Greek philosophy, especially by the Christian philosophers, and by the Indian philosophical tradition in general, both Haindava and Bauddha, that matter does not have any substance, that even at the *vyavaharika* level, reality is constituted by *gunas* rather than *vastus*. Hence it becomes difficult to make a substance - function distinction or take the marginalization of substances as the distinguishing characteristic of “modern” philosophy.

Shall we perhaps find the characteristic nature of “modern philosophy” by investigating its origins, what it was reacting from, what it sought to establish, and what it has achieved or failed to achieve in relation to its objectives?

The origins of modern philosophy are to be sought in the same region as that of natural science. Natural science in the 17th century set itself to “understand Nature”, leaving only what is outside nature or super-nature to theology and metaphysics. Modern philosophy grew up as part of this new “Natural Science.” Of course, that early natural science was at least on the surface, very theologically grounded. It was God (with whose revelation in Scripture theology busied itself) who revealed himself also in Nature. On the surface, the two were united, the natural and the supernatural, in God. The Last cause or First cause was always God, For Jakob Boehme and Giordano Bruno God is *Urgrund* and *Ursache* or *principium* and *causa* of nature.

At least in Jakob Boehme, philosophy is also concerned about the knowledge of nature - ‘Eternal Nature’ as he would call it.¹ But the important thing in the Renaissance of Europe was the separation of philosophy from dogmatic theology - a separation that can be traced back at least to Thomas Aquinas in the 13th century. But the “philosophy of nature” remained heavily dependent on the older metaphysics of the Greeks - of Plato and Plautinus, of Aristotle and the Stoics, of Heraclitus and Pythagoras.

It was the turning from the older metaphysics to a more empirically grounded metaphysics that marks the transition, both in natural science and in modern philosophy. But the empiricism of the Humanists like Ludovico Vives, Campanella, Telesio, Sanchez and Montaigne could still not overcome the dualism between inner perception and outer reality. Campanella for example, had to identify knowledge with feeling,² though all of these mentioned agreed on the principle of starting with ‘facts.’

Bacon, of course, was pursuing “true knowledge of Nature”, as distinct from the tradition or the “idols of the tribe” (*idola tribus*), from the “idols of the cave” (*idola specus*) by which one lapses into the cave of solipsism (a caveat against the cave of Plato), from the

vulgar misconceptions of the common people - the *idola fori* or idols of the marketplace, and from *idola theatri* or the illusory *phantasms* of credulously accepted theories.

Baron Bacon's negative thrust was directed against scholasticism and the authority of tradition; his positive effort is for an unprejudiced examination of reality and the finding out of things for oneself by clear and cogent reasoning. Wilhelm Windelband cites Bacon as a clear example of the German philosopher's general dictum:

"All beginnings of modern philosophy have in common an impulsive opposition against 'Scholasticism', and at the same time a naive lack of understanding for the common attitude of dependence upon some one of its traditions, which they nevertheless all occupy."³

In the case of Bacon the dependence was on the scholastic notion of causality and the four-fold Aristotelian classification of causes. He wanted to proceed from the study of nature to the "form" of all things through the process of Induction.

The key to modernity in both Descartes and Kant lay in their application of *mathematics* to the philosophy of nature. In this sense Kepler was more sensitive than Bacon to the mathematics of motion as the key to the understanding of nature, and Galileo developed mechanics as the mathematical theory of motion. While Bacon goes for "forms", Galileo seeks the measurable, the mathematical, the experimentable. Geometry, measurement of the earth, becomes the key to certainty.

Both Descartes and Kant sought to rescue the Western world from the skepticism of the Greeks by providing a "Method" of sure, certain, self-certifying knowledge not dependent on Tradition. To start from the simple and most self-evident truth, and then to advance by mathematical procedures to more complex and not-so-apparent truths this is what Descartes attempted. *Cogito, ergo sum* is the one indubitable fact - the fact of the doubting consciousness which is beyond doubt. Augustine had come upon this insight already in the 5th century and there need be no doubt that Descartes got the principle from his reading of Augustine under the Jesuits with whom he studied.

The Greeks and Latins had, for Augustine, overthrown all certainty. The Sceptics, who had been drawn largely from the Latin Academy (Pyrrhon, Arcesilaus, Carneades, Clitomachus, Aeneiidemus etc.), had denied the possibility to know the nature of things. Pyrrhon⁴ himself (ca 360 BC to 270 BC), founder of the Sceptic school had taught that man cannot attain to truth, but can know only appearances; that the search for truth had no solid basis or starting point; that to every proposition one could oppose a contrary and equally probable proposition; that the wise man should therefore abstain from passing judgements.

Modern philosophy, one could say, is the fight against the peril of skepticism. Carneades (ca 214-129 BC) the outstanding Sceptic philosopher and founder of the Third Academy, had performed that set of two fine speeches in Rome on 155 B.C., one for justice, and the other against justice, both so equally convincing, that Cato the Elder, Censor of Rome had to expel him from Rome. Cleitomachus, student and successor of Carneades, was a Carthaginian and Augustine knew the writings of these skeptics. For him the only indubitable point was the existence of the fact of doubting and of the doubting consciousness.

Augustine started with the fact of doubt and the existence of the doubter. Descartes, more than a millennium later found the same indubitable starting point-the indubitable fact of thinking and therefore the existence of the thinking consciousness.

Descartes was only 23, when he shut himself up alone in a stove-heated room in mid-winter⁵ and sought an indubitable starting point for his cogitations, and a method for arriving at truth by pure individual cogitation, with “the simple resolve to strip oneself of all opinions and beliefs formerly received.”

Descartes tried then to do away with Tradition in general and the scholastic tradition in particular his effort was to start with one indubitable self-evident datum, and from the foundation to build up the architectonic structure of “truth” using only clear reasoning based on four strict principles: a) an honest personal judgement, b) analysis of problems into parts, c) reasoning from the simple to the more

complex and d) being as exhaustive as possible in exploring alternative possibilities.⁶

But Descartes attempt to pull down the old ramshackle intellectual building of Scholastic tradition and to build a whole new edifice designed and constructed by a single mind was qualified by some other rules, which strike one as being exactly the opposite of what he wanted to do in the architectonic. For example the first of his additional rules related to personal conduct in the intellectual enterprise goes like this:

“To obey the laws and customs of my country,
adhering constantly to the religion in which
by God’s grace, I had been instructed since my childhood.”⁷

So Descartes wants both - a rational architectonic without tradition, and traditional religion. The assumption is that there is no conflict, at least no unresolvable conflict, between the two. He may have succeeded to his own satisfaction, but to his posterity this reconciliation of the two proved impossible: Enlightenment and Secularization, the twin processes that accompany Western modernity, rejected Traditional religion, and decided to place Reason on the throne with the Senses as executives and informants. Critical Rationality and Empiricism thus became the watchwords of modernity.

In Immanuel Kant too, the religious element is strongly there, but his effort was to make the reasoning process independent of all religious propositions. He saw three worlds-the world of nature, the world of mind or consciousness, and the transcendent world. Pure Reason was no use in understanding the third. Reason did achieve some understanding of the world of nature but by a process which had been unexamined. Critical reason had to turn back upon itself, make the mind-world its object, and analyze, not the noemata which the later and full-fledged phenomenologists analyzed, but the noetic process itself. Before we could make the world of nature properly our object, we have to make reason itself an object, analyze its processes and laws, name the categories of the understanding and forms of intuition which *a priori* determine how we understand the world of nature, and discover its limits.

Pure Reason, for Kant, can deal with only objects that confront our sensibility, and neither religion nor values can be in this category and the pure understanding is thus useless for religion and ethics.

Kant was seeking to establish modern philosophy on a secure basis, by ruling out certain disputed areas out of the discourse, by focussing on the process of the understanding as it forms concepts, by determining *a priori* the categories that determine the understanding and shape its products. The question, of course, which Hegel raised, and which Jurgen Habermas has restated recently, is “What is the process by which the knowing process is known, if it is not the same as the process by which external objects are known, what is the validation for the knowledge about knowledge?”⁸ If empirical testing is part of what constitutes modernity, then certainly Kant’s Transcendental Logical (Transzendentallogisch) method is speculative, unscientific and unmodern.

Hegel’s solution was, of course, worse than Kant’s according to Habermas. The great idealist philosopher simply dismissed the problem about the reliability of knowledge as merely psychological an unjustified fear of error. But that was precisely the point of modern science and modern philosophy, to reduce the fear of error by having objective standards of measurement and testing. Thus Hegel too fails to qualify as a modern philosopher.

But his critique of Kant still stands. There is no way of ultimately validating the knowing process by any analysis of that process itself; the knowing mind, in the knowing process, is a subjective agent; but in being known, it is transformed into a known object, and then a new mind as knowing subject has to appear on the scene to effect this knowing of the knowing mind. The knowing ego slips away every time we try to fix our attention on it, and in place of the knowing subject that we wanted to know, a known object appears. At the same time as the old knowing subject disappears and is transformed into a known object, a new knowing subject, appears as the knower and we cannot get hold of this known as it is, i.e., as knowing subject, for the very moment we reflect on this knower, he is transformed into the known.

The knowledge of the knowing process thus remains problematic, and inadequate as certification for the reliability of the knowledge yielded by the process. It was this problem which the neoKantians like Ernst Cassirer and Susan Langer sought to solve but with no dramatic success, that has recently been picked up by Hans Georg Gadamer in a new framework.

More or less rejecting Hegel's proposal to understand the knowing mind in terms of its origins⁹ rather than its functioning, Gadamer goes to the roots of the subjectivist - historicist tradition popularised by Dilthey and Heidegger, and proposes the hermeneutical principle that all knowledge is fore-knowledge, i.e., that the knowing act is basically a thetic one, in which the perceiving mind projects a particular concept from within itself to the external object seeking confirmation and repudiation.¹⁰

German thinking, which despises Anglo-Saxon rationality as philistine and somewhat commercial,¹¹ wants something more integral, and the geisteswissenschaft literally created by Wilhelm Dilthey, and used by Windelband, Rickert, Simmel, Weber and others, serves, as in integrating category for meaningful understanding ('deutendverstehen' of Max Weber) of all reality, social or physical.

And yet neither Dilthey nor Gadamer would claim that their theories are empirically verifiable or falsifiable. What they insist is that this Anglo-Saxon insistence on objective standards or verifiability almost to the point of denying any function for the subjective in knowledge, is both foolhardy and impractical.

Anglo Saxon Philosophy of Science has today come full circle to the acknowledgment that "objectivity" devoid of any subjective element and "proof" are both unattainable in Science.¹²

There is correspondingly a collapse of this great faith in something called "modernity" in philosophy. Philosophy in the west is in a cul-de-sac, perhaps in three or four different cul-de-sacs. Neither Linguistic - Analytical philosophy, nor Phenomenology or Existentialism, yes, not even Structuralism or Game Theory of knowledge, have been able to certify themselves as reliable ways of approaching reality.

Marxism, and the German Hermeneutic School, by allowing the idea that Science is a human construction gained in the process of dealing with reality, one that is never final and ever dynamic, always open to critical re-examination, have kept one element of modernity, namely the insistence that all knowledge should be doubted and subjected to criticism. They have only partially been able to maintain the other element of modernity, namely empirical verification or certification.

What has not yet happened on a wide scale in the West is a recurrence of the kind of scepticism popularized in the Third Academy of Carneades (214-129 BC) and Clitomachus (2nd cent. BC). Nor have they known our kind of scepticism - the brutal dialectic of Nagarjuna, or the *Prasangika-Madhyamikas* in general who delighted in demolishing other people's theories about essence and existence, function and causality, being and non-being and all the rest.

But it may be the case, that with the collapse of the alleged foundations of modernity, which seems imminent at least in some of the developed market economy countries of the west, they too may seem to a greater modernity by reviving the traditions of vedanta or Madhyamika or Taoist philosophies.

It may become more modern given the present trends, to see empirical reality merely as *pravartika* - *satta* or *samvrti* - *satya*, or as the *Tao* in its *Wu* (nothing) form. The West may study again Sankara and Nagarjuna and Kumarajiva and Chung - Tzu and Tao - sheng, and find new meaning and new modernity in them. They have already for some time been exposed to Yoga and Zen in their more elementary and practical forms.

1. Jacob Boehme *Six Theosophic Points* Ann Arbor Paperbacks Univ. of Michigan, 1958.
2. See Wilhelm Windelband, *A History of Philosophy - Vol. II - Renaissance, Enlightenment, Modern*. Harper Torch books, New York, 1958, Part IV, Ch. 1:29 pp. 376-377.
3. Op. Cit. Part: IV: Ch. 2:30 p. 383.

4. It seems Pyrrhon never left any philosophical writings. We are dependent on his disciple Timon for his teaching. See L. Robin, *Pyrrhon et la scepticism greece* 1944.
5. Discourse on Method. Part II - first and last paras.
6. Ibid. Part II.
7. Method - Pat III.
8. Jurgen Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, Eng. Tr. Jeremy J. Shapiro, Beacon Press, Boston, 1971, p. 7. The phrasing of the question above is my own.
9. i.e. through understanding a) the process by which the socialization of the individual takes place; b) the universal history of humankind, and c) through the three forms of the Absolute Mind, namely religion, art science, through which history moves.
10. Gadamer puts it this way: "The hermeneutical experience is concerned with what has been transmitted in tradition. This is what is to be experienced. But tradition is not simply a process that we learn to know and be in command of through experience; it is language i.e. it expresses itself like a 'Thou.' 'Thou' is not an object but stands in a relationship with us." *Truth & Method*, Eng. Tr. p. 321. His point is that all knowledge is a dialogue with Tradition.
11. "a philistine culture with a void at the centre lacking anything worth being called a philosophy i.e. any kind of conceptual thinking that tries to make sense of life as a whole, or even of the social order in which culture is embedded" - Georg Lichtheim Lukacs, Fontana / Collins, 1970, p. 23.
12. Professor Imre Lakatos says "... now very few philosophers or scientists still think that scientific knowledge, is or can be, proven knowledge. But few realize that with this the whole classical structure of intellectual values falls in ruins and has to be replaced. ... *Criticism and The Growth of Knowledge* p. 92.

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5

Take A Look At Our World

A partial perception of some aspects of the world today

When some months ago the World Alliance of YMCAs asked me to present a “World overview” at the 1977 YMCA world Council, the hope that I would be able to summarize and clarify for myself my own present understanding of World reality led me to accept the invitation, almost gladly. But as I sat down to put my thoughts to writing, I found that it would take several hours of presentation to do anything like justice to my task. This is not, therefore, a World Overview. It is a mere glance - a partial perception of some of its realities.

In the English language, partial can mean either “relating to one part” or “one-sided.” This presentation is intentionally both. Only a few aspects of world reality are treated. And that from a definite perspective - namely that of the suffering section of humanity, with a commitment to the cause of the victims of injustice in the world today.

“Enlisted in Reconciliation” is the theme for this World Council. It is a Christian theme, taken directly out of St. Paul’s writings (II Cor. 5:18). And yet, out of its context, it can be misleading. Did Jesus seek to reconcile the Roman Government and the Jewish leadership? Did he seek to reconcile the Scribes and Pharisees with the Jewish people? If he did, he would not have used such terms as “Go, tell that fox” about the Roman Ruler or “Woe unto you, hypocrites” to the Scribes and Pharisees. Not all reconciliation is necessarily Christian. Where there is injustice, one cannot simply reconcile the oppressor and the oppressed before the injustice is removed. That is why quite often only struggle can lead to peace, why quite often cooperation is possible only after there has been a confrontation.

For that is the way the world is. An arena where good and evil confront each other, confront us. The Christian teaching is that history is a field where the wheat and the tares grow together, and can

be finally separated only at the last time. But at the last time, good and evil are not reconciled to each other. The wheat is gathered together into the barns, the tares are burned in the fire. Thus it is not reconciliation that finally overcomes evil, but judgement and destruction.

Often Christians are afraid of the theme of judgement in the Biblical message. The Day of the Lord is always a day of mercy and redemption to the victims of oppression, as well as a day of doom to the oppressor. In taking a look at this world of ours, we shall keep both themes in mind - judgement and reconciliation.

The ultimate destiny of reality is what our Lord prayed for - That All May Be One. Taking all the first letters of that theme you get the word TAMBO. But let us not forget that we have to add one more letter - for the One who prayed for TAMBO, Christ; for the Way to TAMBO, the Cross; for our own role as adopted sons and daughters of God, actors in the drama that ends up in TAMBO. If you add the letter C (for Christ, for the Cross, for the Church, for Christians, for Compassion, for Concern, for Conviction and Commitment, which are all necessary for the reconciliation that leads to TAMBO), and rearrange the letters of TAMBO, you get COMBAT, and that is a word which we as Christians should take seriously in a world where evil is forceful and regnant (My apologies to listeners of Spanish and other languages - the TAMBO - COMBAT point cannot be easily translated.). We must clarify our vision, to recognize the presence of evil in us, outside us, in persons, in societies, and find ways and means of combatting that evil by the methods of the Cross. Our World Overview must therefore be concerned about the YMCA's own role in this Combat as well as in Reconciliation.

I. Perception of the Universe - Some Philosophical and Theological Considerations

We are part of the universe. We cannot stand above it to get a bird's eye view. We can transcend it in our minds. But never completely. For our minds are also conditioned by many limits.

(a) Our five senses are not equipped to take in all the data in the

universe. A dog sees and hears different things which we don't see or hear. There are radio waves in this room which our sense-equipment does not pick up, but an ordinary radio can pick up and transmit to our ears as sound waves. In fact, with all our sophisticated scientific equipment and technology, we have access only to a very tiny segment of the spectrum of reality. We see reality only "as through a glass, darkly."

(b) Our culture limits our perception. Our ways of looking at and understanding reality is severely conditioned by our cultural traditions, linguistic habits, our educational system by our historical experiences, by our geographical location, by our science and technology, by our religious heritage, and so on.

(c) Our perception is also limited by our interests. We perceive more readily what is useful to us. If there is a gold coin and a piece of tin lying on the floor, we are more likely to perceive the gold rather than the tin. If making money is our main interest, then we will readily perceive the easier ways of gaining profit, and our admiration will be for those who are making piles of money. If power is our main interest, the powerful and their acts will be the ready objects of our perception. If you are a capitalist, you are likely to see more easily the obstacles to the development of capital and profit, rather than the problems faced by the poor. Our interest determines our perception and we cannot see some things in the world, because to see them in their true light would demand some difficult and radical changes in our own attitudes and actions. My perception of the world may not agree in all respects with yours, for my cultural tradition as well as my interests may not be the same as those of some of you.

The Basic Structure

We can see the universe as composed of inter-related objects in space, beginning with the galaxies of space coming to our own star, the sun, and our own planet, the earth, and our own continent, country, town, village, home. etc. This is the spatial view of the universe - the universe of physical scientists for the last several centuries.

More recently, especially as a result of the Hegelian philosophical

tradition, we have come to see the universe, not as a series of objects, but as a series of inter-locking events. Each event is a unit of reality related to both past and future events. The event is the stage in which the objects and persons play out the drama, and all events together constitute a process. This view has been popularized by thinkers like Bergson, Whitehead and Teilhard de Chardin. We will call it the temporal view of the universe. Historical understanding and Process Philosophy prefer this framework for looking at the universe. This is the view today of the social sciences.

A Christian view must take into account the views of both the physical sciences and the social sciences. But that is not sufficient. In certain circles of western thought, there is growing up a new framework, which comes closer to the Christian understanding of reality. And this framework is of primary significance. Most of our world analyses, while sophisticated and complex within their own framework, show the limits of the framework which does not allow all the data being taken into account.

This new framework is provided by a confluence of several fields of new biological research. Prof. Burr of Yale was one of the early pioneers, much misunderstood by his contemporaries, of the line that life itself was a field of forces (Burr, *The Fields of Life*) an interdependent system of force-fields. Many of these forces we do not as yet know very much about, but have evidence enough to suspect that they are impinging upon us.

A human being is not simply put together with three components called body, mind and Spirit, but is himself or herself a force-field which inter-acts with other force-fields. But so are animals, plants, all living things. The development of Kirlian photography in the Soviet-Union and ongoing research in what they call 'Bioplasmic Energy' in the Soviet Union, has made it possible to perceive that there is in each living being a field of energy which grows and develops and changes in inter-action with other force-fields in the universe. The genes and chromosomes direct this energy in a particular direction of growth, but not the only determinant. The whole environment, with various known and unknown force-fields, inter-acts with the

force-field of each unit in it. These force-field and their mutual interaction are not completely predetermined. The forces which we call consciousness and will are also components of this system of interaction of force-fields.

It is very important to get this perception right, because it provides a more comprehensive framework for our 'World Overview.' I cannot go into detail here, but proceed from this to a Christian theological perspective which helps us to see the world from the perspective of the faith.

II. A Christian Perception of the World Reality

Again one goes into short-hand to provide the rough outline of this Christian perception of reality. We posit the following basic force-fields which constitute reality.

1. The uncreated force-field which we Christians call the Triune God

This is the fundamental reality from which all created reality flows and on which everything else is dependent. We say that it is God Who, without Himself being caused, is the cause and ground of all. He not only 'called' the creation into being from non-being; He directs its movement forward to its fulfillment, gives the energy for that forward movement, and takes the universe to its goal. Without the guiding and sustaining force-field of the *energeia* of God, nothing can exist, and all that exists will go back to nothing when it falls outside this force-field of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

2. The created force-field of the process of creation and its evolution

This is the realm where our science explores the reality and its inter-relationships. Science is also a growing and changing body of knowledge. No philosopher of science worth his salt can today say that it is a body of proved knowledge. All they can say is that this body of knowledge stands up fairly well to certain reality tests and are therefore helpful for our understanding of that reality and for the development of a technology that allows us to control, transform, manipulate and use that reality for our own purposes. Science does

not reveal to us the whole of reality. It helps us to uncover certain hidden aspects of the inter-relation between various sub-fields of energy (matter and life in there various manifestations). Matter, too, is a field of energy, we know now. So is life, as also consciousness and will.

3. The subsidiary force-field created by human purpose, will and action

As it expresses itself in person and community, in society and history. This human creation is the area where freedom, which is God-bestowed in creation, most clearly manifests itself, at least from our own perspective. The human mind or consciousness and will, which is itself more than just the activity of the brain, cannot be located in any part of the human body. It is an aspect of the force-field that constitutes us as human beings, and has its own freedom, within limits, to choose, to understand, to will, to image, to create, to transform. It is an important concern of Christians that all humanity is able to develop to the full this freedom. But it can be developed only when that which stands in its way is removed.

4. The created force-field or anti-force, generated by created being in its freedom, the anti-force of nonbeing, non-truth, non-love, non-wisdom, non-freedom, which we call evil.

This force of evil, generated in freedom by the creation itself, contradicts and seeks to countervail the power of being and the good given to the creation by its Creator. This force-field is operative, Christians believe, not only in each human being; it is operative also in the institutions and structures of society; it works even in organic and inorganic matter, for we see that everything in creation is subject to non-being, driving everything towards disintegration, decay and death. This universe now open to our senses is subject to death and decay. It is not permanent. If it is to endure, it has to be different, not subject to Carnot's Second Law of Thermodynamics, which states that all things are energy-fields giving out the finite amount of energy contained in them and moving towards the "stable equilibrium" of death and inert non-being. St. Paul says the same thing in Romans 8:21, when he says that the creation itself shall be liberated from the

slavery to decay and share in the glorious freedom of the children of God.

We would be making a big mistake in our World Overview if we assumed that it is in this world of time as we now experience it that evil shall be finally overcome. The ultimate overcoming of evil demands a reconstitution of our world at all levels. Matter itself will have to be reconstituted in the New Heaven and the New Earth, so that it no longer obeys Carnot's Second Law, but is able to endure for ever as a non-disintegrating force-field.

We must also not make the other mistake in our World Overview that because in history the good will always be mixed with evil, therefore we can do nothing about it. Our business in history is to carry on the struggle against evil, to overcome evil by the good.

5. The force-field of the Incarnate, Crucified and Risen Christ

The final overcoming of evil is, however, assured. It is assured because Christ is risen. Death, who ruled as king in our little world, has been overcome. He has lost his universal triumph. "Where, o death, is Thy victory?" "Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Cor. 15:54) when Christ tasted death and broke its fetters by rising from the dead. The power of the Risen Christ is the place where we see the uncreated force-field of the Triune God, and the created force-field of the human energy come together into an ineffable union for the redemption of this death-bound universe. This new force-field of the Incarnate Christ is also operative in our world, redeeming it, saving it, taking it from death to life, from evil to good, from non-being to being. We Christians are privileged to be conscious of the mystery of the incarnate Christ's presence in the world, and are (ought to be) ourselves manifestations of that incarnate Presence. This is the new dispensation of the Holy Spirit. where the life-giving, form-creating, liberating, personal power of God operates through a new divine-human community called the Church. Despite all her failures, despite all her atrocious betrayals of her Lord, despite all her lethargy and indifference, despite all her desire for power and glory, for comfort and popularity. she continues in a mysterious way, to be the bearer of

the redeeming power of Christ. Without any civil or economic power, or despite her misuse of civil and economic power, she is a force-field in which the power of the incarnate, crucified, risen and ascended Christ, the power of the new economy of the Spirit, operates in a mysterious way to bring the creation to its fulfillment and destiny. The mystery is in the ineffable way in which both the uncreated divine and created human force-fields work together in a synergism which we believe but cannot understand.

6. The created force-fields of the cosmic powers

Our faith affirms that the drama of history is larger than the stage of history that we can see with our senses. The author of Ephesians tells us of powers and forces “in the heavenlies” (3:10) who are involved, negatively and positively, in our historical struggle. As the Jerusalem English Bible puts it: “The sovereignties and powers should learn, only now, through the Church, how comprehensive God’s wisdom really is, exactly according to the plan which he had had from all eternity in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Eph. 3:10-11). On the one hand, “it is not against human enemies that we have to struggle, but against the sovereignties and the powers who originate darkness in this world, the spiritual army of evil in the heavens” (Eph. 6:12). On the other hand, the heavenly ‘cloud of witnesses on every side of us, invisible but operative, are engaged with us in the same struggle of good and evil, between being and non-being, between life and death. Christians can subscribe to no world overview that disregards or overlooks this dimension of the process of the universe.

This, I submit, is the hasty sketch of the framework within which we must view the world, neither a three-storey framework of hell, earth and heaven, nor a secular framework which takes history as self-contained, self-generating and autonomous. All six aspects are important.

III. The World of History Today

I don’t know how many of you were able to orbit with me in the universe in my flight into cosmic space for our World Overview. I am splashing down, landing in the sea of current history. Can you come

with me for a quick glance at our earthly, historical world, the hard realities which you all know so well. I shall be brief, and touch on the four poles of that earthly historical reality today. Not that I believe in the first, second, third and fourth worlds of which people frequently speak. But they are groupings which have much in common:

(a) The first for me, in degree of commitment, because of my own historical situation, is the world of the poor millions. They are the majority of humanity - the poor people of the non-oil exporting countries of Asia, Africa, Latin America, the Caribbean and the Pacific and other islands.

(b) Then there are the people of the socialist countries - of China and the Soviet Union, of North Korea and Vietnam, of Laos and Kampuchea, of Angola, and Guinea - Bissau, of Cuba, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland, Romania, Albania, D.D.R., Yugoslavia and perhaps Tanzania, Mongolia and others. They are not all equally poor. But they have chosen a path which somehow threatens some and fascinates others, the path of socialist development. The YMCA cannot work in these countries. But they are also people, and their welfare is of concern to us.

(c) Then there are the peoples of the oil-exporting but industrially less developed countries - Venezuela, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, Iraq, Indonesia, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, and other countries. A very large part of these people are Muslims, and we Christians have to make an effort to identify ourselves with them as human beings.

(d) Finally, there are the richer industrially developed countries following the market economy system of development. The U.S.A. is at the head of this group, with West Germany and Japan as seconds-in-command. They are now-a-days referred to as the North. But some of their members are south of the equator, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

Now some people, in their overview of the world, tend to see the polarization as North-South or Rich and Poor. Such terminology helps only to obscure the reality. The difference between Cuba and Chile is not between the rich and the poor, or North and South.

Let us stick to the four-fold classification of peoples - non-oil sub-industrialised, oil-exporting sub-industrialized, socialist sub-industrialized, and industrialized. The lines of demarcation are not always so clear. For example, India is the eighth largest industrial producer of the world, but I will put her in the first category, for she has still not begun to resolve her problems of poverty and employment despite a high degree of industrialization.

These four groups are sufficiently homogenous, however, to permit us to regard each group as a corporate force-field, increasingly recognizing their common interest (despite internal competition) and often in confrontation with each other.

We should first take into account the fact that most of YMCA activity is in zone 1- non-oil sub-industrialized countries and in zone 4 - the market economy industrialized. In fact many people regard the YMCA as an arm of the industrialized market economy countries and their economic and cultural interests operating in the sub-industrialized non-socialist world. For many of our leaders, the YMCA appears like a link between the middle-class interests in our country with similar interests in the industrialized capitalist countries. This impression is reinforced by the obscured fact that the YMCA seldom organizes a programme of action which can be regarded as revolutionary or radical. There are very few among the local YMCA leadership who would be regarded as exceptionally progressive. They are generally defenders of the status quo in most countries.

How much attention has the YMCA paid to the central fact of our time - the growing gap, despite great industrial progress, between the rich and the poor? Statistics can do no justice to the dimensions of the problem. But it is a fact that during the 20 years from 1952 to 1972 the total product of the developed market economy countries grew from \$ 1250 billion to \$ 3,070 billion, (i.e. by more than 145 percent). Their per capita income grew from \$ 2,000 a year to \$ 4,000 a year. The gap previously between the rich and the poor was \$ 1,825 in 1952. in 1972 it was \$ 3,700. That is, with the doubling of income in the rich countries, the gap between the rich and the poor has more than doubled, though poor countries' per capita income grew from \$175 per annum to \$ 300.

Remember that the figure of \$ 300 per annum is not yet realized for the millions of India and many other less developed countries. We in India are still staying at \$100 per annum, whereas some countries in Europe or America have gone up to \$ 6,000 - the gap is thus 1 to 60.

Does the YMCA do anything to make young people aware of this problem? The YMCA has made development one of its priorities, and emphasizes the need for self-reliance and self-determination. I am glad to hear that the YMCA in the U.S.A., through its international Division has organized some 25 groups to study the international linkage of economic problems, to study the New international Economic order and the activities of the Trans-National Corporations. There are perhaps a few other efforts here and there. But can the YMCA effectively serve the young unless it gives Central priority to the question of the growing inequality of distribution of wealth in international human society?

The tragedy of the thing is that there is no strategy developed so far which gives eventually narrowing the gap. All strategies, including that of the U.N. at present have been seen to be inadequate. Where then is the hope that the young people of today can live tomorrow in hope? If the latest report that is before the U.N. - the Leontieff Report - is to be believed, what people call the New International Economic Order will not be able to reduce the gap.

How many years longer of frustration will it take before we all wake up to the fact that the existing economic system in three out of our four zones is doomed and cannot be repaired beyond a certain point? That it is built in such a way as to go on increasing the inequality and therefore the look for an alternate system in all the three zones must be accelerated with all deliberate speed? That the ritual of conferences and commissions and reports and bureaus are inadequate to find a lasting solution to the problem of injustice in our world. That unless radical international solutions are found, the per capita income of Non-oil Asia and Africa will be below \$ 500 a year even in 2000 A.D.? That the poor countries in world are in debt already to the tune of a 100 billion dollars, that this debt burden is

going to double in a few years, that there is no way to reduce this burden at present, that it will go on growing at the rate of 10 to 14% every year?

How long will it be before we realize that

(A) we have to shift from a market economy system to a system where ownership of the means of production and decision - making on production and distribution rests with the people if justice is to be ensured both within and between nations?

(B) the proposed New International economic Order is a false help before our eyes to make us believe that the problems will eventually be resolved?

(C) without a New International Political Order, a New International Economic Order cannot be implemented effectively?

But what can the YMCA do to face this enormous problem facing humanity? The question needs to be tackled here. Youth has already become radicalized. If the YMCA still continues to be a middle-class bourgeois organization, it will only alienate itself from the young people it wants to serve.

IV. The Poverty of Affluence

A second major problem that the YMCA should be seriously concerned about in its World Overview is the growing dissatisfaction that young people feel about the consumerist affluent society we have created. This is a problem not only for the industrialized fourth zone, but also equally for the first three zones.

We have proceeded, especially in the second half of this century, after the Second World war, with the assumption that having is being. We have measured our growth and development in terms of the quantum of goods and services each nation is able to produce and consume. We have classified the World into developed and under-developed in terms of the degree of industrialization, in terms of how many cars and TV sets each family has, in terms of the goods we can see in our shop-windows.

Such a view helps only the cause of the industrial capitalists and

leaders who make more money and thereby acquire power over others. Even the socialist countries are reduced into compromising their own basic humanism by getting into the rat-race of producing and consuming. The rich capitalist countries taunt the socialist countries for not having achieved their level of industrial production and consumerism. Without wanting to do so, the socialist states also are forced, both by public demand and by the pressure to compete with the capitalists, to follow the way of consumerism.

The countries of the Two-Thirds World, which belong to our first and third zones, also enter the rat-race. Even India, with all its high spiritual values and rich religious traditions, the search in Government planning is almost exclusively for a higher GNP. Growth is still measured in terms of Gross National Product, and growthism, or the desire to keep up with the Joneses, makes us slaves of this mighty machine of producing and consuming. We refuse to ask the question: What are the human values and qualities that we need to promote in the very process of producing more.

When the question is raised among intellectuals in India about human values and qualities, the answer is: let us first solve the problem of poverty, then in the second stage only we can afford to worry about values and qualities. The quest for quantity and the quest for quality are thus divorced and separated into two stages, and the planners devote all attention to the question of quantity, paying only lip service to quality.

The fact of the matter is that quantity of goods produced and quality of human life are not two separate stages. It is in the very process of producing more goods that we make irreversible decisions about quality of life. If acquisitive greed and pursuit of power and profit are the motives for work, then even if we achieve the level of prosperity prevailing in Sweden or U.S.A., we will be no better off as human beings. Social values are produced, not after we have produced and consumed enough, but in the very process of production and consumption.

Gandhi may have been right in saying that for the hungry God must appear in the form of food. But that is not the whole truth. Man

does not live by bread alone, but he does live by bread or rice. The point is that the way we produce and distribute bread is itself shaping our beings, our personalities, our societies. Therefore, in some countries the first priority, is not economic growth, but the social education of the people, in order to liberate them from the greed and selfishness that makes society unjust. Their GNP may not be as high as in some others, but they have achieved some significant human progress with regard to unemployment, illiteracy, educational opportunities, a more equitable distribution of wealth, a greater hope and vigour among the people rather than fatalistic despair, a belief that they can act as people to solve their problems, rather than look to the state to solve all their problems for the poor. The most radical change needed is in the selfish attitudes of people, for it is when people learn to work and to cooperate, not each for his or her own personal benefit but rather for the common good, for the benefit of all, that they are able to solve their problems.

A country like Tanzania still faces many tremendous difficulties. It still has to grow in Industry and agriculture to ensure a better level of fulfilling human needs. But it is moving strenuously in the direction of the right to employment and work, the right to have a roof over your heads, the right to free education and health services, the right to participate in social decision-making under the over-all national plan, the right not to be exploited by foreign or national business interests - these are basic human rights are necessary for the dignity of man and woman.

These rights are not affirmed with the same effectiveness in countries of the First, Third and Fourth zones. And since most of us in this world Council meeting come from these three zones, we should see what we can do to sharpen our own understanding of these problems!

V. Some Economic Issues which are Political

Due to limits of time, I will have to be aphoristic in my statements. These brief sentences are meant to promote discussion in the groups:

1. The problem of poverty, want and suffering in the countries of

the first zone can be solved only by a disciplined effort of all the people, in an internationally coordinated way, based on the principles that (a) equity of distribution, (b) self-reliance based on the social ownership of property and social participation in decision-making, and (c) social motivations for work are necessary conditions for such a development.

2. The international trade system, the international monetary system, and the international banking system will have to be brought under democratic world control in order to ensure justice between nations. There is no provision for this in the proposed New International Economic Order of the United Nations. The N.I.E.O. operates within the World Market Economy System and seeks only to remove some of its most glaring contradictions, so that the system of oppression and exploitation can go on, to the benefit of the already rich.

3. In a capitalist economy, both nationally and internationally, those who own large amounts of capital, including the Trans-National Corporations, are able to produce more and accumulate more. The system therefore enhances injustice fundamentally, though some injustices are removed from time to time. The system needs overhaul. The N.I.E.O. is unable to do so. It is therefore a false hope.

4. The right of every able-bodied human being to socially useful labour, and the right of every human being to food, shelter, clothing, health services, education and communication, are the two fundamental human rights. It is wrong to give priority to the freedom of speech over the two fundamental freedoms - the right to work and employment, and the right to live a dignified human life with basic needs met. The other freedoms, the so-called democratic freedoms, are necessary, but they should generally be given only second priority. However, in some situations it may be a first priority to fight for freedom from torture, freedom from extra-legal arrest and detention, freedom from oppressive oligarchical control, because these freedoms are brutally suppressed there.

5. In terms of many local conflicts, we need to realize both their economic basis and their international ramifications. For example, in Southern Africa, the white minority oppresses the black majority for

the sake of economic dominance and exploitation. In the Middle East, Israel, given a free hand, can quickly dominate the Arab countries economically. The fight in Lebanon is to be explained partly in terms of the Christian Maronites dominating the economy and exploiting the Muslims. In Northern Ireland, the Protestants dominate the economy and exploit the Catholics. Even in Uganda, it is a fact that the Christians dominate the economy and oppress the Muslims. In all these areas, the conflict of interest between western nations of zone 4 and the nations of zone 2 play a large part. We should always look to see which nations are on the side of the oppressed, and how they use their influence.

6. New hot-beds of conflict are emerging. The most important is the Indian Ocean and the Red Sea. This has to do with eventual control of the oil-producing areas, as well as with military strategies for world domination. Israel, Iran and Southern Africa are also important keys to the control of the Indian and Red Sea. The new conflict is in the Horn of Africa between Somalia and Ethiopia. The naval-nuclear base in Diego Garcia as well as bases in Somalia and South Africa also fit into this pattern of Indian Ocean - Red Sea domination for the sake of ensuring oil flow into zone 4, and for the domination of the world by military-economic power.

7. The alliance between industrial Wealth and Military Power is a major hazard for humanity. Without breaking this alliance the oppressive force of exploitation in the world cannot be finally tackled. The arms trade is the biggest new development in this situation of the growing grip of the military-industrial complex. This trade must be restrained by some ground rules agreed upon by the nations of the world.

8. Disarmament is a major issue towards the resolution of which the YMCA must devote considerable attention and effort. Today world defence expenditure is over 300 billion US dollars a year. This works out to more than 820 million dollars a day. We need a gigantic effort on a world scale to re-channel human energy and resources for peaceful uses. World Public opinion has to be raised on a massive scale to bring about the necessary pressures on all governments. The issue is

not merely that of possible nuclear destruction of the world. It is the gross and totally pointless waste of human effort, its economic aspects, its contributions to generating a military culture, and its contribution to the growth of injustice in the world that should engage world attention.

9. The nuclear energy issue becomes the focus of an impassioned controversy in Europe - particularly in Sweden, Holland, France, etc. We should understand the issues involved.

(a) There is a formidable shortage of energy to be foreseen if industrial development is to continue.

(b) Fossil fuels and hydro-electric power cannot supply this need.

(c) Alternate energy sources like solar power and wind and wave energy are not, with present technology, adequate to meet the need.

(d) Nuclear energy is a feasible alternative, but the risks involved are so immense that we have no right, with the present scope of our scientific technical knowledge, to proceed further with the building of nuclear reactors, until safer waste disposal techniques are discovered. We have no right to expose present and future generations to a totally insecure world as a consequence of:

(i) risky disposal of highly unstable nuclear wastes;

(ii) the possible risks of leakage due to human error or negligence in the construction of reactors;

(iii) the hazards of hi-jacking of nuclear fuel and the risks of radioactivity to which people can be subject as a result of such hi-jacking;

(iv) the risks of using nuclear technology for destructive purposes by states, by terrorists, etc.

The debate has two aspects. First if you ask me: Is it a sin to exploit nuclear energy, I would answer with an emphatic no. All power is under Christ and given to man. Second, if you ask me, is it right, in the present time-scale of our knowledge of science and technology, to go ahead with the large-scale building of nuclear reactors all over the world, I would again answer with a "no", in the light of the di-

mension of the four risks mentioned above.

10. That leads to an important point - the direction and orientation of research. Money for research now comes partly from government and partly from the corporations. The corporations are primarily interested in quick and easy profit, and their research is only incidentally directed to human welfare. Government decisions on research allocations are also disproportionately oriented to military technology. Little money is available for research on solar energy or appropriate technology, or for developing patterns of social organisation which enhance rather than reduce the quality of human life.

11. On the Ecological Problem, the main issues are:

- (a) regulation of population increase and distribution
- (b) economic regulation of resource and energy use
- (c) control of pollution

(d) regulation of industrial development in order not to take the risk of upsetting the eco-balance or exposing future generations to the risk of radio-active contamination.

(e) the debate on the tension between sustainability and justice in the world.

12. On Trans National Corporations, the position is as follows. Their defenders argue that:

(a) they increase effectiveness in large-scale production necessary for development;

(b) they facilitate the transfer of technology;

(c) they create some employment in a world where large-scale unemployment is a major problem;

(d) they make generous contributions to education, culture and research; and

(e) they show the way, by transcending national frontiers, towards a future world of international economic organisation, towards a new international economic Order.

Their critics argue:

(a) the kind of technology they bring is not suited to the real needs of a country, but are geared only to their quick profit; Zone one needs labour-intensive technology; TNC technology is counter-productive;

(b) they concentrate not on essential goods like food, housing, clothing, transport etc. but on frivolous or luxury goods like beverages, toilet articles and automobiles;

(c) they create oligopolistic patterns in pricing (e.g. drug prices);

(d) they provide unfair competition to smaller local entrepreneurs and drive them out of business;

(e) they evade control by national governments;

(f) they bribe and corrupt national governments;

(g) they use their tremendous economic power and international contacts to bolster up reactionary regimes and to subvert the efforts of progressive forces;

(h) they gain control of the news media through advertisement funds, through subsidies, and through international news agencies which are themselves Trans National Corporations; by information control they exert undue power in societies;

(i) they spread an unhealthy consumerist culture, becoming major instruments in a cultural imperialism which is part of the white western domination of the world (technological and organizational power is now concentrated in the white western world and TNC's are an expression of that concentration).

VI. Direct YMCA Issues

I should like to conclude by raising some issues of direct importance to the YMCA.

1. How can resolute action be taken to ensure that people under 30 have a majority role in policy-making, in planning and execution of policy, and in local leadership in the YMCA? This is a high priority question. The YMCA cannot be revitalized unless the youth of the world comes to have a dominant role in YMCA affairs.

2. How can the YMCA foster not only personal growth in individuals, but also make young people see clearly that no genuine and just growth of persons can be achieved except through the commitment to the growth and development of society. How can YMCA programmes coordinate personal growth and social growth at the same time?

3. The YMCA, both on the world level and at the national level, must do a lot of fresh reflection on the question of its objectives and purpose. Does the YMCA still regard itself as a lay Christian movement, which through programmes of study, action and worship, seeks to extend the Kingdom of God in persons and societies? Or should it rather be a secular organization, a kind of youth club, professing some Christian values but in effect only another organisation for social service? It is of course less embarrassing not to make any religious claims, especially in our secular cultures. In a society like America, where the only significant non Christian religion is the Jewish faith. Christians can open the leadership to all comers and still retain majority control. But What about Bangladesh or Japan, Turkey or Indonesia? It is clear that one single policy cannot hold for all these situations.

Besides, to be Christian means both identity and openness. In different situations we must look for ways of maintaining both identity and openness.

The issue, however, is not just whether we keep the C in YMCA. You may find a formula that will allow selective admission of non-Christians into the membership and leadership of the YMCA without losing your identity as a historically Christian organisation. But that is only part of the problem. The real question is in what form shall the Christianness of the YMCA be expressed? Having a rule that Christians should have a majority in the policy-making bodies of the YMCA will not ensure the Christian character of the Y, because:

(a) it is always questionable as to how Christian these so-called Christians are,

(b) even if the leadership is more than nominally Christian, the

policy and Programme of a Y may not be based on a deeper and truer understanding of Christianity.

In the first place, it needs to be said that to be Christian is to be open to all humanity. To be united with Christ is to share Christ's love and concern for all humanity - for Christians Muslims, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, Communists, Atheists - all "Who is my neighbour?" Christ's answer in the parable of the Good Samaritan is: "Don't ask that question. Rather you be a neighbour to anyone whom you find in need, anywhere, under any circumstances."

On the other hand, the Christian has also a closure to the world outside. In the early centuries, on Sunday morning when the Christians assembled for prayer and Bible study, all were welcome to their meetings. No one would be refused entrance to the Church whatever his religious background. But then always a moment came, when the Christians asked the others to leave, and only the baptized entered into a secret meeting with the Lord called the Eucharist, which the unbeliever could not attend but in which he could only be prayed for.

This rhythm of total openness to all and partial closure for the encounter with God in worship should continue to be the pattern of the work of the YMCA. Where that partial closure for worship is abandoned, secularization results and the C becomes inoperative.

It is possible for the YMCA in a country to take the decision to take the C out. This can be done in a country like the USA, or in a country where the Christian community is weak, like Turkey or Bangladesh. What would be the consequence? In both situations, this would virtually be a decision to discontinue the YMCA as an entity after a few years. It is the C that gives the identity to the YM. Once you take that out, the identity disappears, and then you merge with the whole. If Christian identity is important, then the C must remain, both in name and in the character of the Operation. Identity and openness are both equally essential to being Christian. It is from the identity that the openness comes, not from a blank. Openness does not mean open like a meadow, but open like a door.

But the C must also become real. There must be something behind the door that is worth coming to. Otherwise people will attach no meaning to the adjective Christian. But how do we make sure that the Christian element in YMCA is more than in a name? Three elements can be proposed:

(a) *intellectual clarification* - through discussion groups, using the best spiritual and intellectual resource persons in the community;

(b) *worship services* - using a maximum of meaningful symbolism, people's participation and with richness and depth of meaning;

(c) *outstanding sacrificial service* - unusual forms of service demanding a high degree of dedication and sacrifice as well as love have to be created in each situation.

The combination of the three elements of work, worship and study alone can sustain Christianity in a community in the YMCA or elsewhere.

4. In multireligious contexts, especially in Asia, YMCA will have to make a conscious effort to promote deep dialogue with other religions, in order to learn from ancient Asian wisdom. The churches of Asia are afraid to do so. They believe only in a one-way mission and will therefore continue to be ignored or despised by the intelligent people of other religions.

Buddhism, Hinduism, and Taoism have much to teach us, whether we are Asians, Africans, Latin Americans, Europeans, Americans, Australians or whatever else. The new discoveries in nuclear physics bring the insights of those religions very close to the scientific understanding of reality as an inter-connected system of force-fields, where individual units cannot be separated from each other.

The YMCA now has the image of being the agent of western culture to the rest of the world. Can this image be reversed? Can the YMCA facilitate the culture of the world being transmitted to Christians? This is a big challenge.

5. The YMCA now seems to be a middle-class institution. Its relation to the poor of the world is in terms of "social service" in the

sense of doing something for them - a blind school, an institution for the mentally retarded, a clinic in a slum etc. This has two defects - (a) it concentrates on the handicapped among the poor and leaves the vast majority of the poor untouched; (b) it does something “for” the poor, rather than making it possible for the poor to fight for their own liberation from the oppressive yoke. Most YMCA activities of this kind help only to reinforce the oppressive system by dressing the wounds of some of its victims. Can the YMCA undertake some radically new projects involving the structural evils of society, and in which the poor are the active participants in the struggle not merely passive recipients of help.

Learning from the poor is dangerous business. When their forces are mobilized with YMCA help; the forces of oppression will turn their guns on the YMCA. That is when you will need the C in your name.

Let us here in this World Council meeting look at the inter-play of force-fields, and see where the YMCA is lined up now, and where it should be. The force-field of the incarnate Christ is also interacting with us. Let us be sensitive and be guided by it.

(Key Note Address at the YMCA World Council, Buenos Aires, Argentina, June 29 - July 6, 1977)

6

Towards A New Enlightenment This Time - Global, Spiritual and Comprehensive

In less than seven years from now a new century is to dawn upon us. Besides, on that same day, i.e., midnight of December 31, 1999, a new millennium will also burst in on us. At least for those many millions who have come to adopt the secularized European Christian Gregorian Calendar, which happens to be more accurate than others.

As we come together for the centenary celebrations of the Parliament of World Religions held here in Chicago in 1893, I sense a responsibility on our part, to reflect on what we should do in the next six years or so, in order to better prepare ourselves, as a human race, to enter and make a new beginning in the new century and the new millennium. In that sense we are assembled here at the end of the millennium, as Priests and Prophets of the New Humanity, to reflect, to pray, to give thanks together, for the centuries and millennia that the human race has traversed, and to envision the future in a new way. Let us begin our task with the classical Vedic invocation:

*Asato ma sad gamaya
Tamaso ma jyotir gamaya
Mrtyor ma amrtam gamaya
Om shanti ! shanti ! !shanti !*

(From untruth to the True, lead us
From darkness to Light, lead us
From death to the Undying, lead us
Om Peace, Peace, Peace!)

Our human race now lives in the untrue, caught in the darkness of evil, dying and dealing death to each other.

But not totally. Even in the midst of our untruth, the True is present in our souls, mostly as a yearning and a hankering after, but often as a radiant reality shining through the untrue, with its own light. We

dwell in the darkness of cruelty and violence, of war and rape, of greed and lust of dishonesty and deception, but the light in our souls has not yet been totally put out, even by our professed unbelief and arrogant denial of the transcendent. Our hearts still rejoice whenever and wherever there is a glimmer of the life-giving light of goodness, in the mother's all-giving love, in the cup of cold water given to the thirsty, in the sage's saintly life, in the justice granted to the victims of oppression, in the liberation of the enslaved.

We are dying and afraid of dying; but yet we commend the heroic defiance of death, and admire the act of laying down one's life for the sake of others. We still refuse to give the last word to death, who seeks to rule over all. We live in a world where gross untruth, the darkness of evil, and death in many forms gnawing away at the entrails of our souls, are all there powerfully and unmistakably present, even seeming to grow stronger day by day; yet they have not managed to take over completely. The true light still shines in the darkness; truth prevails over untruth in the long run; the good, which seems sometimes to have been overcome by evil, rises again as victor; and life triumphs even when stung by death.

It is that true light which we should seek, in and through our various religions, on behalf of all humankind, in order that it may illumine us more completely and help dispel the enveloping darkness. I believe seeking that illumination is the central task of a Parliament of World Religions, today, as it was a hundred years ago, and will be a hundred years hence. And it is about seeking that light in a new way, about that yearning for a new *illumination*, about striving together for a new Enlightenment, that I wish to speak today.

1. What happened Here a Hundred Years Ago?

As everyone knows, the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago (1893) was part of a much larger show, one episode in a big exhibition. On the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus' "discovery" of America, the main purpose of the Columbian World Exposition in Chicago was to display proudly to the world the recent achievements of European technology on American soil, and to say to the world

that the Manifest Destiny of America was to lead that world into the technological paradise.

The Parliament of World Religions was largely a decoration to the main show, though there were some in the organising committee of the Columbian Exposition who felt that “religion” had to find some kind of a place in such an important exhibition of the achievements of human creativity. The liberals in the Committee did not want the Protestant Fundamentalists or the Catholic new immigrants of America to run the religion part of the show. The best solution to transcend the problems both of maintaining “separation of Church and State”, and of avoiding Fundamentalist domination of the Religion part of the Columbian Exposition, was to make it a Parliament of World Religions. For that very reason the Christian churches of America took little notice of the Parliament. And generally speaking they have today little or no memory of what happened here a hundred years ago.

Let us take a quick look at the America which organised the Columbian Exposition and the Parliament of World Religions in the last decade of the 19th century.

1848 was the watershed year for America and American civilisation as a global phenomenon. In that year the Spanish were finally defeated; California and New Mexico were annexed; the Pacific frontier was opened up; the ‘Manifest Destiny’ of America as Leader of the World became clear. America was taking over from Europe the White Man’s Burden of shaping the world and dominating it. Remember that 1848 was the year of the Communist Manifesto of Marx and Engels. Europe itself was torn asunder by the riots of 1848 in Germany, France, Austria and Italy. For those with vision it was clear that America had to be Number One in the world, even though European nations like France, England and the Netherlands were quickly taking over the global empire from Spain and Portugal and by consolidating their own world empires becoming temporarily exceedingly powerful.

America, a powerful confederation of some 40 states, was the nation built by the European Enlightenment of the 18th and 19th

centuries. America had thrown off the British yoke without any great effort. The Spanish had been brought to heel. The native peoples of the continent had been either decimated or marginalized; the Blacks had neither voice nor power; the Whites were the rulers of the land, the rest being merely hewers of stone and drawers of water. There was little resistance to the Industrial Culture or to the Enlightenment Ideology of the dominant group. Even agriculture was being fast mechanised and industrialised; the vitality of the nation as it emerged out of the Civil War was simply prodigious. Slavery was abolished, but the slaves were still there, along with the machines, to power industrial and agricultural production.

The 1870's saw a striking spate of creative innovations and ingenious inventions, accompanied by enormous finds of mineral deposits and smelting techniques. Rich silver deposits in Nevada and Montana, big increase in lead production in Missouri and Illinois, the development of the wonder metal called Aluminium (1887), Portland Cement (1870s), Steel (1875). Railways and the Telegraph came in 1866; the typewriter in 1873; telephones in 1876, and finally electricity, the most striking expression of power, in 1878. All this was quite new even at the Columbian Exposition of 1893, only 15 years later. And the real bid at that Exposition was to put all this new technological glitter into the global market.

Let me repeat: The main exhibit at the Columbian Exposition was Science-Technology, not Religion. The Parliament of World Religions had little lasting impact. The New Industrial Culture, based on modern science-technology, with its secular assumption and global market aspirations, with little regard for the meaning of human existence or for the transcendent foundation of that existence, was the central reality in Chicago a hundred years ago. And so it is in our world today, a hundred years later. It was not Religion, but the Technological Paradise, that the salesmen of the Industrial Culture were trying to sell to the world. And the world has bought it, and wants more of it.

Religion was very marginal in that Exposition. It has become even more marginalised during the ensuing hundred years, in the whole

world. This is the issue to which I wish to address myself. In order to do so I must take a closer look at what our civilisation has done to the whole concept of religions. And I must look also at the foundational assumptions of that civilisation. This alone can show us the true long term goals of inter-religious dialogue and collaboration.

2. The Nature of the Secular Culture

In the Europe of the High Middle Ages, when the Roman Catholic Church reigned supreme, the religious and the secular were just two modes of being religious, not two distinct compartments of society; except that the words ‘religious’ and ‘secular’ did not have their present sense. According to classical and medieval use, *religious* meant ‘monastic’ or bound to a ‘rule of life’, while *secular* meant what was outside the monastery. The noun ‘religion’ was seldom used. Whenever somebody occasionally said “he has taken to religion”, it meant that he had joined the monastery, not that he changed from unbeliever to believer in the sense we give those words today. Medieval Christendom made no distinction between believer, but did make the distinction between Christian and ‘Heathen’. Everything in Christendom was Christian, including the ‘saeculum’ or the world of everyday life outside the monastery. Religion in our sense was the pervasive, non-pluralistic Catholic faith, which was no matter of personal or individual choice, not a private affair, but the faith of the community. The community could have contained individual dissenters, but Such dissenters were neither approved nor went without reprimand, The Western Church and its religion, with Rome at the centre, was the overarching authority over king and citizen, over the monastically religious and over the so-called secular outside. There was no separate compartment of life called the religious. Everything was religious, until the European Enlightenment of the 18th and 19th centuries which broke them apart into secular and religious new way, so that the secular was totally free from religion..

Christian Europe of the High Middle Ages had another noticeably distinctive quality. It neglected what modern civilization takes for granted — the seemingly obvious possibility that human beings, by the exercise of their reason, could gain mastery over nature. They

believed the Augustinian-Anselmic principle that only by illumination through grace by faith, could the human intellect come into its own. *Credo ut inelligam* = “I believe that I may understand”. Only the Church and the Christian believer understand; the heathen is all mistaken in what he thinks he understands. Human beings depend on God’s illumination for their understanding of reality. This was medieval belief, which kept them from developing modern science and technology.

It seems that Sir Isaac Newton, one of the founders of modern science, set out on his study of *Optics* in order to understand how the light of *illuminatio* works.

The secular civilisation in which all of us now participate, whether we are Christians or Muslims, Hindus or Buddhists, Jains or Jews, Taoists or Secularists, Sikhs or Shintos, Zoroastrians or People of the Primal Vision, has risen as a reaction to these two features of European Christendom. We are co-opted into that secular civilisation by our educational system, by our healing system, by our economics and other social sciences, by the institutions of our civic polity, by our public media, all of which are not only secular in their foundational assumptions, but also actively promote secularism as an ideological religion. By secularism I mean that ideology, which believes that the world open to our senses and our instruments is the only world that exists, and that meaning has to be found in that universe without reference to anything outside of or transcending our field of sense-perception and our rational mind. It is that ideology which makes religion supposedly a matter of personal choice, and thus a compartment of life to be banished from public life and pushed into the margin.

The Protestant Reformation of the 16th century was the first major break with that mono-religious, monolithic tradition of Medieval Christendom. After the Reformation, Rome was no longer at the centre. The new bourgeois individual, particularly if he was propertied, was beginning to assert his authority over against the authority of the Church; but only if he could lean on another authority, the authority of the Christian Scriptures.

Before that, the Second European Renaissance (the First European Renaissance was the Carolingian or Charlemagne's Renaissance of the 8th and 9th centuries, which created Christendom in the first place) had already in the 13th and 14th centuries provided Europe with an alternate structure of authority to the Christian Church - namely the classical pagan wisdom of the Greeks like Plato, Aristotle and the Stoics. The West recovered it from the Arab culture which had taken over from the Eastern Christians. This alternate structure of loyalty had uneasily co-existed with Church Authority, and there was no rupture between the religious and the secular, partly because of the learned and cultivated Renaissance Popes who were able to integrate classical scholarship as well as worldly wit, pomp, power and pleasure-seeking into the religious leadership. Even the Protestant Reformation which revolted against Papal authority did not directly lead to a rupture between the secular and the religious.

That rupture came only with the European Enlightenment of 18th and 19th centuries. Now all religious authority was repudiated, including that of the Christian Scriptures. Human beings claimed to have come of age. At least propertied individuals among them; for Adulthood and Enlightenment or *Muendigkeit* and *Aufklaerung* were only for the economically independent and educated classes - the *Gebildete Staende*. At least for these classes there is no external authority or Master. Human Knowledge is freed from its bondage to faith. Human Reason is now Autonomous, not depending on God or Religion. You no longer had to believe in order to understand, nor did you have to ask anyone's permission to take over the world and transform it according to your own desires. God, grace, revelation and so on were all irrelevant and superfluous. The human reason, unaided by any external authority, was able on its own, to reflect on experience by the methods of science and to discover and enunciate the truth in the form of scientific propositions, which could be publicly tested time and again. Only in such a context could science/technology have triumphed the way it did, and proceeded to build the technological paradise which was on display in Chicago a hundred years ago.

By the European Enlightenment I mean that peculiar intellectual fever that spread in Europe in the 18th century which gave to the

rising middle class the conviction that they could master the whole of reality by the human reason without any references or God or to the Transcendent.

The great first manifestation of the Spirit of the European Enlightenment was the French Revolution of 1789, which totally and publicly repudiated God, religion and religious authority; Its two great prevailing manifestations today are (a) Western Liberal Humanism-Secularism, and (b) Western Marxism-Socialism. Both systems idealise modern science and depend on it alone, as the principal way to vision and meaning. Both are basically secular in their outlook, and have the greatest confidence in the autonomy of human reason and will. Both regard religion as something which belongs to the childhood of humanity. Both say: “In science we trust”. What is this science which powers these ideologies?

The Empirical Aristotelianism of Bacon had combined with the logical Platonism of Descartes, to create modern science, which now takes over the structure of authority from faith, theology and philosophy. A new “saeculum” comes into being, a world subject to human reason and human technological manipulation. In that the ruling authority is the secular-scientific ideology, which throws into the margin not only religion, but also art and literature, poetry and philosophy. Religion was allotted a corner in the global Columbian Exposition, as a private affair of individual choice, nothing to do with the common life, nothing to do with education, healing, political economy or public media. It may serve marginally as a sales pitch, or as a way of keeping the masses drugged.

3. The Question before this Parliament

May I ask you, leaders and representatives of the World’s Religions, is that the role you want to accept? Sitting in the margins of human existence, are we going to go on croaking together like frogs, making a big noise about Peace, Justice and the Environment? Or alternatively, is the role of the World Religions simply chanting pious hymns and peddling a cheap spirituality that produces instant inner peace and tranquility through meditation?

What indeed are the alternatives open to us as members of the human race and as adherents of the World Religions today?

There is one alternative which seems to attract many people today - that of recreating a mono-religious state, where the state would be run according to the dictates of one particular religion, namely the religion of the majority, be it some form of Islam or Christianity or Hinduism. This will be more or less like going back to Medieval Christendom before it broke up, as a model. I cannot honestly say that an Islamic or Hindu state would be necessarily worse than many of the states that we have today - states which deny justice to the poor, which let political crimes go unpunished, which deliberately deceive and oppress its own peoples, which use the army and the police to terrorise its own people, states in which business magnates, politicians and bureaucrats appropriate for themselves most of the wealth created by the hard work of the people. I do not reject the mono-religious state just like that, but I see two major reasons why I cannot accept that model even in the form of a Christian State, which fortunately does not exist outside the Vatican.

My two reasons for not accepting the mono-religious model are very simple. First, I regard human freedom as a sufficiently high value, as not to let me accept living under a state which forces me or any one else into a particular faith against his or her will. Enforced virtue ceases to be virtue. Enforced religion is a travesty of true religion. Second, if in one country the majority religion oppresses and persecutes the minority religions, this is an invitation to other states where those minorities are in a majority to engage in tit for tat. For example, when fanatic Hindus demolished the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, India, governments of many Islamic states I know had to use the utmost restraint against their own people to keep them from retaliating by destruction of Hindu temples; they did not all always succeed. But I do not want a world in which that kind of mad retaliation goes on. It is a simple fact that if the majority community in any state oppresses its religious minorities, in another state innocent members of that oppressing community will have to suffer. This is not just and cannot be accepted.

What is the other alternative? In my country intellectuals never cease from croaking about the virtues of the ‘secular state’; they, in fact, go on to make up a fake ideology called ‘secularism’ as the panacea for all problems of inter-religious conflict. In India, both the majority of intellectuals and the Congress Party along with Leftist parties, delight in casting away all known meanings of the word “secularism” and to seek to endow it with a special Indian meaning which the word cannot hold. To me secularism means an ideology which asserts that the world open to our senses is the only world that matters or even exists, and that meaning for life is to be sought without recourse to religion or revelation. It is the prevailing ideology of the civilisation created by the European Enlightenment, and I simply will not allow the state to stuff that ideology down my throat. “The secular state”, also a product of the European Enlightenment, is a concept that I can live with, but with which I cannot be satisfied. Why? Its fundamental principle is professed to be the “separation of Religion and State”. In practice it becomes much more. It means also the elimination of religion from education and healing, two areas of human existence with which religion should be deeply concerned. It means invoking the name of God in a state-related public ceremony becoming an offence. It means imposing a godless ideology on the culture itself. It means driving out religion, which should be at the centre of human life, to the periphery and the margin.

In my own country, which claims to be a “secular” democracy, this principle of separation of religion and state has become a farce and a fiction. Vote-banks and the choice of electoral candidates are still largely based on religion and caste. The President of India is seldom chosen without a lot of consideration of the religious community to which the candidate belongs. Strategic military posts and civil jobs are kept away from certain religious communities, Educational concessions and job reservations available to members of certain scheduled castes cease to be available, the moment they become Muslim or Christian. I think that it can be held that “separation of religion and state” does not work in most cases; religion continues to be a major factor in political decisions in far too many states. Nowhere is the state really secular, whether in France or in America.

I think the time has come for us to reject both related concepts - the secular state and the separation of religion and state. We should replace these with the alternate concepts of “democratic pluralism in the polity” and “right relation between religion and state”. I wish I had time to develop these two ideas at some length; but that would detract from my main point, to which I now proceed. That point is about an enlightened human culture, and only indirectly about the polity.

4. Towards a New Enlightenment

Enlightenment is a concept to which the Indian tradition lays a special claim, though by no means it is India’s monopoly. It belongs to all traditions, but Buddhism made that concept central. *Buddha* literally means the Enlightened One. The word for Enlightenment as a noun would be *bodhi*, *sambodhi*, *samyagsambodhi*, or *prabudhhata*. It is not a concept, but a state of being and consciousness, or perhaps a state of being beyond being and consciousness.

There are some features common to both Buddhist Enlightenment and European Enlightenment. Both are reactions against misuse of authority by the dominant religion - Brahmanism in India and Christianity in Europe. Both repudiated not only clerical and religious authority, but also the authority of the accepted scriptures, the Vedas and Upanishads in India, the Bible in Europe. Both appealed to the human being to stand up in defiance of authority, and to think and act for oneself. Both were exhortations to a new understanding of the nature of reality, and to a new approach to dealing with it and with the problems of human knowing and existing. Both overthrew the prevailing notions about God and soul and proposed autonomy of the human person - in Europe, an autonomy centered in the individual reason, in Buddhism on the Buddha-nature of all reality. Both were regarded as godless by their opponents and by the established order which they dared to defy. Both were opposed to ritual and cult and dogmatic theology, though in fact they soon developed their own substitutes. Both sprang from deep socio-economic changes, from the 18th century rise of the power of the bourgeoisie and the Industrial culture in Europe, and in the case of India, from the gigantic

immigration of new races and peoples into the Indo-Gangetic valley in the 6th century BC and the consequent urbanization of the region.

That is indeed a great deal of commonality to reckon with, between the two Enlightenments; but their specificities are even more relevant.

The first and most significant difference is that the Buddhist Enlightenment provides a trans-sensual and trans-conceptual Vision of the Infinite Whole which puts everything inside that Whole in the right perspective, transcending the subject-object dichotomy and experiencing the Oneness and the all-inclusiveness, which unites the seer, the vision and the light, of that Single Reality. The European Enlightenment, on the other hand, relies on the senses and discursive conceptual thought for its vision, is directed to the part as finite and distinct from other parts (its vision of the whole is always one made up of parts), and keeps the subject outside of and separate from what it sees as object.

The Buddhist Enlightenment heals and transforms the person, putting an end to suffering and desire, generates a sense of co-being, compassion and friendship for all reality, and makes oneself unpretentious, transparently humble and non-domineering, capable only of transmitting peace, joy and meaning to others. The European Enlightenment gives knowledge-derived power over the object and impels the desire to possess and manipulate and dominate. It also heals and liberates, from ignorance and ill health, from unnecessary fear and from a great deal of superstition and untruth. It reveals much that remained previously hidden, and delights the senses. It gives power to produce goods, both those that are necessary for humans, and much more that is not only not necessary, but often becomes anti-human and damaging to all life. It helps war and violence to become more sophisticatedly destructive.

There are so many positive elements in the European Enlightenment (EE) for which we have to be thankful. It is not hard to imagine what a miserable place our earth could have been, if the EE had not happened. Humanity would have been disintegrating through ignorance and squalor, through plague and pestilence, through disease and natural disasters, through starvation and epidemic. The

EE has given to us modern science and technology, the institutions of democratic polity, systems of education, healing, information-gathering, transport and communication, without all of which 6 billion people could not have lived on this planet. At the end of this millennium let us give thanks for what is good in the European Enlightenment, perhaps the most significant development of this millennium.

But that does not mean that we as the human race can continue to live on this planet by the light of the European Enlightenment alone. For it obscures more than it reveals - like bright sunlight that shuts out the night sky with its myriads of stars and millions of galaxies. If we lived 24 hours a day by the sunlight, who would know that the reality that the sunlight reveals is only a billionth part of the gigantic universe. What we see so clearly by the sunlight of modern science makes us blind to the mighty mystery that lies behind and beyond what we see and hear.

5. A Triple Orientation for Inter-Religious Dialogue

At the close of our millennium let us seek to give inter-religious dialogue a triple orientation. Other goals and purposes of such dialogue may continue to operate. But these three goals that I propose need to become central. These are three aspects of what I regard as a New Enlightenment (NE), which starts with the religions in dialogue with science and philosophy, and spreads in the whole global human culture.

The first is that all religions seek inner renewal together so that each religion will be oriented to the welfare and redemption of the whole of humanity, and not just to the interests of its own adherents. Here we need to help each other, calling attention lovingly to each other's parochialisms and exclusivistic or self-aggrandising tendencies. This means religions ceasing to attack, caricature and fight each other. The great principle of Ashoka's (295-232 BCE) Rock Edict, namely that any religion which could advance itself only by attacking other religions did not have the right to exist, has to come back into our practice.

What is more, we should lovingly help each other to correct ourselves by telling and being told what we are doing wrong to each

other, not behind each other's backs, but straightforwardly and lovingly, face to face. A distinguished Muslim leader was telling me the other day that because he dared to point out, during an inter-religious dialogue organised by a Christian ecumenical body, some of the arrogant and patently non-Christian ways in which Christians had attacked and caricatured Islam, he had become *persona non grata* to that ecumenical body. If we cannot patiently listen to such criticism about our own religion, we are not equipped to enter into inter-religious dialogue at all. We have not really entered into deep inter-religious dialogue, until we reach the stage where we can lovingly and patiently correct each other and ourselves be corrected.

The second orientation that I regard as integral to genuine inter-religious dialogue is the commitment to the unity and welfare of humanity. I believe this is fully possible, but rarely practised. To me it means that without necessarily weakening my commitment to my own religion, I should work (not just talk) with people of other religions and with secular people, in order-

- to eliminate all forms of social injustice and corruption, such as bribery, smuggling, hoarding and black-marketing, nepotism, unfair political, social, and economic or cultural practices;

- to prevent as well as resolve conflicts among nations and communities on a just basis and by peaceful means;

- to promote good education, good health, good life-environment and unhindered communication for all;

- to ensure fair and equitable distribution of the globe's wealth and resources, and to secure fair and just terms of trade for all;

- to advance responsible and democratic exercise of power within and among all nations;

- to make it possible for the feminine half of humanity to exercise their rightful role in social-political, economic and cultural activity;

- to eliminate war and the weapons trade as well as militarism and terrorism in general;

- to liberate research in science and technology from its present

enslavement to the interests of war and profit and empire building;

to ban effectively all research, manufacture, trading, stockpiling, testing and use of all weapons of mass destruction, especially nuclear, chemical, climatological, and biological weapons and delivery systems;

to provide for proper care and rehabilitation of all victims of natural catastrophes, of addiction to tobacco, alcohol and drugs, of famines, of human cruelty, injustice and neglect;

to provide inspiring models of self-sacrificing goodness and ennobling compassion;

to check the alarming growth of violence and promiscuity in society by providing healthy, cultured and sane entertainment, especially in the public media, which does not exalt violence as a desirable expression of power or sex as the main source of pleasure;

to find ways and means of bringing the growing power of national and transnational corporations under democratic international control, in order to enlist that power for the implementation of the above-mentioned objectives;

to pioneer in the creation of internationally democratic structures of global legislation, adjudication and executive power, with a healthy balance of central and decentralised exercise of political- economic and social-cultural power; and to renew creativity in all religions in order to make them true sources of life, light and meaning to all.

Pardon me for the length of that list. It is still far from exhaustive. Since the purpose is to demarcate a point of orientation in the horizon of humanity in the next millennium, this short list will do, to indicate its general nature.

The implementation of these objectives calls for enormous resources and a vast array of institutions of inter-religious collaboration. I regard a commitment to these objectives an integral part of the New Enlightenment we need.

Now to the third and final point of orientation for inter-religious dialogue and co-operation, by no means an easy point to delineate in a short speech. This is a New Enlightenment which takes the best

from both the Buddhist or Classical Enlightenment and the European Enlightenment.

The European Enlightenment, unlike the Buddhist Enlightenment, was not primarily an experience of the individual, but of the whole of society, which as a result of it changed its entire perspective on reality at least among the educated classes. It was a social movement that spread like wildfire in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries, and still continues to spread wherever the educational, medical, political-economic, social-cultural values and institutions of the EE are accepted by the elite, which means nearly all countries of our planet.

We want the same to happen for the New Enlightenment which we seek. It may begin with a few pioneering individuals, as was also the case for the EE, but it must eventually become a powerful movement that sweeps through our planet. It must be global, spiritual and comprehensive.

On the one hand, unlike the EE, it will be based on the perception of reality opening up to us in the religious experience of various cultures, and not on the mistaken assumptions of the European Enlightenment about humans having attained maturity already and about human autonomy being independent of the Transcendent Whole. It is that perception which enables us to question radically the prevailing secular perception of reality which ignores the Transcendent. And that radical questioning, impelled by the deep-going religious perception of reality, will be the central thrust of the New Enlightenment or NE. This will help humanity to cast aside the erroneous secular perception of reality, in which we as perceiving subjects stand, as it were, outside the world we seek to know and manipulate and in which there are only two realities: the perceiving and manipulating human subjects, and the perceived “objective” world.

The New Enlightenment will give us a new perception of reality in which Reality is three-in-one : first, the Transcendent Source and Foundation of all being, call it Allah, God, Brahman, Tao or Buddha-nature; second, the universe as the manifest reality which comes from the Transcendent Unmanifest, and is totally contingent on it; and third this strange human entity which participates in both the

Manifest and the Unmanifest, and has this specific and unique double mediatorial task of manifesting the Transcendent in the Universe and leading the Universe to the Transcendent.

In this alternative perception of reality, the centrality of humanity will not, as in the secular perception, be of a domineering nature, but will be entirely mediatorial, i.e. manifesting wisdom, power, glory, beauty, goodness and love, not humanity's own, but wholly dependent upon and derived from the Transcendent, as well as embodying in ourselves the whole universe as we offer it up along with our own living selves to the Transcendent in thankful adoration. In this perception of reality, science and technology will still have their proper role of manifesting God's power and wisdom, but will not be the private tools of humanity to conquer, possess and dominate the universe.

Such a perception of reality will have earth-shaking consequences. To mention a few, education will not be oriented to the running of the machinery of economic production, but will be a genuine search for meaning and fulfillment for a mediatorial humanity which can never exist or be fulfilled without the Transcendent or without some kind of universe, which universe in turn finds its fulfillment only in the liberation and fulfillment of humanity in the Transcendent.

Its consequences in medicine and healing would be enormous and radically transforming. Diagnosis will no longer be in terms of defects in part of a mechanism called the human body, but in terms of arrhythmias in the functioning of person and society. And therapies will be more human and spiritual, directly related to the Transcendent as well as to the social and physical environment.

In the NE's perception of reality, economics and all social sciences would be basically transformed - away from the focus on commodities and closer to the right relations of humans among themselves, to the environment and to the Transcendent. After all, that is what economics literally means: the science and art of managing and correcting human *oikeia* or inhabitation of the universe. Economics should be primarily about human relations and only secondarily about money and commodities. A commodity-centered economics is a major defect of EE thinking.

In the NE, we will have a totally new concept of the function of the state, not as a sovereign power, but as an enabler of the local community; not as a dividing boundary, but as a unit in a global community. In the NE state, no one will speak of “separation between religion and state”, but only about the “right and democratic relation of a pluralist state to religions inside and outside”. In such a state, religion will no longer be on the margin; constantly renewed, the religions will vie with each other in serving the whole community in spiritual and moral creativity. In such a state no one will think or speak of “foreigners and aliens” but only of “neighbours and friends”. In the NE state, politics will not be for opportunists and careerists, but for sages, for men and women of wisdom and maturity.

Conclusion

We have to recover the classical enlightenment, The *samyagsambodhi* of all ancient traditions. We must use that perception to go beyond the European Enlightenment and its false assumptions. We must liberate and redirect science/technology to nobler human ends. We must seek a New Enlightenment in which the Transcendent is at the centre, and the whole universe and the whole of global humanity are also at the centre of our concern. Then only can the intent of the invocation with which we began be fulfilled for society as well as for individuals: from the untrue to the True, from infernal darkness to Light Celestial, from death to the Eternal and the Undying.

Nothing less can be the correct orientation for inter-religious dialogue in the coming years.

The Coming Great Civilisation Shift On Preparing To Lay Foundations For a New Civilisation

Francis Fukuyama has done it again, this time closer to the mark. Last time, in 1989, shortly after the historic Polish election, but before the East European communist governments actually fell, he published a well syndicated article on “The End of History.” Well, history does not seem, as of date, to have quite come to an end, as Fukuyama thought or wished in 1989.

This time according to the international Herald Tribune of July 13, 1992, he wants to inform us about the coming great civilisation shift, about to take place mainly in Asia. In describing this shift, he begins by making a distinction between capitalist ideology (economics) and western style, liberal democracy (politics). Capitalism is more universally accepted in Asia, according to Fukuyama, but that is not necessarily the case with western style democracy which is supposed to go with it.

The element of truth in Francis Fukuyama’s judgement this time seems much greater than last time. Asian capitalist governments like those of Japan, Korea, Singapore, Hongkong, and Taiwan appear to have achieved whatever measure of stability and growth they have managed to maintain in the last ten years, by combining capitalism with a form of government not necessarily linked to western style of liberal democracy, but a polity more akin to a cross-breed of Asian despotism and Chinese Confucianism.

The theoretical formulation of this combination still seems to be in the exploratory stage. I am personally very much interested therefore in Professor Peter Kato’s paper on “The Proposals of Wa-ism and the Japanese way of Looking at the Free, Private Market order” to be presented in Committee VI on STRUCTURE.

Fukuyama, himself a Japanese American, and formerly deputy

director of the Policy Planning Staff of the U S State department, thinks that a specific character of the Oriental way and particularly of the Confucian system is to place community welfare and interests above individual rights and interests, while quite often in the west individual rights get the higher priority. The former seems to be the case, according to others, even with non-Confucian systems like in Malaysia or Indonesia, and also to a certain extent in India.

Whether Pacific Asia as a whole could ever adopt a single ideology or coherent value system or not, a possibility at best doubtful, there are people like George Yeo, Minister for information and the Arts in Singapore, who hold that “a common East Asian consciousness is emerging” and that the economic rise of the region “will be accompanied by a cultural renaissance of historic importance” (see NHT cited above, p. 4). Some think that with trade, investment and migration spreading, some of these East Asian influences could penetrate the west as well.

From my own point of view the canvas in the foregoing discussion has been rather narrow. We need to stretch our minds a little and examine the process by which we once made the shift, from feudalism, through mercantile capitalism to this present secular civilisation and to its ideologies and institutions. Our secular civilisation has developed two main types of economies, the urban-industrial marxist and the urban-industrial capitalist, both creations of the 20th century.

The two types of economies are both heavily dependent on two sets of institutions: on Modern science/technology as the major force of production on the one hand, and on the secular principle and polity as the main mode of social control on the other. The shift in East Asia to which Fukuyama and colleagues are drawing our attention fails to deal radically with either of these primary sets of realities. And to that extent they fail to deal with the problem on our hands-inducing the right kind of civilisation shift needed to save humanity from self-destruction.

Intellectuals in Asia, having been largely formed and trained in the culture and educational system of the global urban-industrial, secular,

scientific-technological civilisation, seem hardly able to question radically or transcend fundamentally their dogmatic faith in science-technology and in the secular principle and polity. The present speaker for one carries a deep conviction that without such radical questioning of these two dogmas, the needed civilisation shift cannot occur. Any discussion on “Absolute Values and science” cannot make significant progress without a prior discussion on the philosophical and conceptual understandings of both the secular principle and science/technology. This is the point which I want to elaborate here. So that further work can be done by a group with much more competence and knowledge than I can by myself hope to bring to bear on the subject.

1. Science And The Secular - Mutually Reinforcing

In our civilisation the secular principle and the methodology of science are not only dependent on each other, but also mutually reinforcing in a strong way.

The secular principle seeks, though with very limited success, to keep the public realm free from all religious considerations and influences.

Modern science too finds religion or God irrelevant to its pursuit. Truth can be discerned or discovered by a method that is totally independent of such extraneous hypotheses related to God or religion or Transcendence, it believes. God, religion or transcendence makes sense only when subjected to investigation by the method of science.

Both the secular principle and modern science want to limit our concern to the world open to our senses (and open to our scientific instruments which are after all extensions of our senses), and to no other world.

Without the phenomenal achievements of modern science-technology which today far outshine the present demonstrable powers of religion, the secular principle could not have attained the prestige it today has. The origins of modern science can be traced back to a western Christian civilisation or to a Deist version of it; but certainly the progress made by science in the last two centuries was accelerated

by freedom from religious control and liberation from consciously held religious presuppositions.

The development of the secular principle in political economy, in the knowledge-acquiring process and in public life and the progress of science/technology in the production process, have gone hand in hand, mutually reinforcing each other, not only in Europe but also in other climes and cultures.

II. The Secular Principle

The secular principle does not confine itself to the separation of Church and State or Religion and Politics. We need to look at it in at least three of its primary dimensions: in healing, in public education, and in the political economy. And in all three areas, our civilisation appears to be in big trouble.

1. Healing

Healing, in almost all pre-secular systems, has been integrally related to religion. As Dr. Andrew Weil, Professor at the University of Arizona College of Medicine, puts it in his award-winning book on health and Healing (revised and updated edition. Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1988):

The link between the holy and the healthy is the common ground of religion and medicine. In many cultures the two have never been separate (p. 43).

In the western culture too, the two had been held together, from ancient times. In the Greek culture of old, healers and patients alike offered sacrifices to Asklepios, the patron god of healing. Healing took place in the Asklepeion, within a temple ritual.

In modern medicine the holy and the healing system were torn apart from each other through the “scientific” secular principle. This has led to further distortions in healing like the separation of body and mind (failure to recognise the psycho-somatic cause and cure of all disease), the treatment of the body as a machine with detachable and replaceable parts the excessive reliance on chemicals and antibiotics for repairing the body, insufficient attention to the body’s

own healing power, and to the roles in healing of faith and prayer as well as a community, and so on.

There are already significant trends in the direction of alternative systems of healing and of holistic healing, but the basic rupture between healing and the holy gets but scant attention from scientific researchers. No doubt the achievements of modern medicine are impressive, but its drawbacks and dangers are also becoming increasingly obvious with every passing day.

Ultimately we need nothing short of a comprehensive, radical and adequately effective revision of the whole healing system. And this can be done only by examining the unscientific secular principle at the bottom of modern scientific medicine. Nothing in modern science can justify the secular assumption that the world open to our senses is all there is. And in the realm of healing, people are just beginning to realise the falseness of the secular principle.

It is not totally impossible that the faint glimmers of what is needed in a new civilisation will first show up in the realm of healing and health, which, as the enlightened public has begun to recognize, has been secularized to our detriment. The state in many cases now licenses only secular systems as “approved.” The necessary research for moving in the direction of holistic healing is now done not by the State, but by private individuals and groups. State systems of Medical training and licensing are still in the hands of diehard dogmatists of the old secular variety. Not only is the state itself secular, but it infringes on the fundamental rights of citizens by imposing a secular system of healing on them. This is neither morally right nor legally justifiable if morality and law have anything to do with the welfare of human society and civilisation.

The shift needed is both in the secular principle and in the discipline of medical science, including Medical training, licensing and institutional practice. A basic shift in the healing system may make the advance to the needed civilisation shift a little easier. There is a lot of possibility here for individual and group pioneering by both medical and social scientists, as well as by the general public.

B. Education

There is a lot of talk these days about the need for “value education” in schools and in other institutions of learning. One often hears the insensitive and largely unreflected comment that our education systems fail to produce morally responsible persons. This certainly cannot be true, for if no educated person were morally responsible, society would have disintegrated long ago.

Schools cannot bear the whole responsibility for creating an alert moral consciousness in a society. The morality which politicians, members of the business community, professionals and others actually practise has a lot more to do with galvanizing or dissipating the moral fibre of a society.

Having stated that, one should nevertheless not minimize the powerful role the school, the university and other institutions of learning and training playing in the development of a civilisation. These institutions are the holders, makers, and transmitters of culture from one generation to the other. In one sense the school is one of the specificities of being human. Animals and birds do not seem to run training institutions and schools for transmitting what the collectivity knows. Our human fledglings when born seem to be the most helpless of all species within the range of our knowledge. Newborn humans, unlike other animals, need an extended period of care, tutelage, and training before they can begin to fend for themselves. As the civilisational heritage grows in volume, the period of tutelage and parental dependence also seems to grow longer, since there is so much more knowledge and skills to be transmitted from generation to generation.

Certainly it is this period of tutelage that lays the foundations of the human person’s perception of reality and provides the range and scale for the choice of values to be pursued in life. The school may not be the whole of that tutelage and training programme, but does constitute a very substantial part of it.

But can “values” be taught in school, like history or botany? And how does one get agreement on what values should be taught in a pluralistic society? Obviously there are no simple answers to either

of these two questions. Of course there are acknowledged values like human freedom and dignity, integrity and responsibility, which cannot be questioned by anyone. But would talking about these values in class carry you anywhere?

The important thing is not what values we talk about, but what values are embodied in the educational system itself.

Most people come to educational institutions in order to raise their earning capacity and to rise in the social ladder. In a country like India, the official line is that “education is investment” - the embodied value for the government is to put in some money into education in order to get more out of it in terms of production. From the personal point of view, if a university degree is a means of raising one’s earning power, then the least effort by which that degree is obtained would be the best deal. In other words, education is no longer a value in itself, whether in the school or in the university. For governments as well as for people, it is only a means to a higher end or value, namely money.

Our educational systems have become largely ancillary to the urban industrial, scientific-technological managerial production machinery. Educational systems and institutions are forced to prostitute themselves to serve the interests of the production system, by concepts like “education as investment” and “job-oriented education.” And of course, prayer, religion and God have been banished from the school by public decree in many countries.

The consequence is that children get the general impression that prayer, religion and God are but marginal. If they were central they would have been so manifest in the school where all important knowledge is supposed to be imparted.

School, as we have said, is only one of the formative forces in shaping consciousness. Traditionally, the two other educational forces have been the family and the social culture. But family worship, traditionally very powerful in shaping humans, is becoming more and more difficult to practise in the urban industrial society. And culture, which traditionally had been pervasively religious, undergoes heavy secularisation in our societies. Children (or parents, for that matter),

do not attend temple festivals or participate in religious rituals on any regular basis. Social gatherings become more and more secularised.

Religious education, such as is sponsored by religious institutions, becomes increasingly marginal in relation to the secular school where the child spends most of its time. Such religious education as exists has become largely academic or intellectual in method and content, and fails to make lasting impressions on children.

The formative or educational systems thus constitute a mighty secularising and alienating force. This is a major factor corroding our civilisation, and the adding of a little “value education” to a secular system is unlikely to be adequate or effective. Reshaping the school and the university, the family and the social culture, rescuing them from the tyranny of the secular principle, seems absolutely necessary for shaping new and more sane civilisations.

Again it will be unrealistic to expect the State to do all the pioneering at this point. The business community, the religious leadership, and the general public have all key roles here in setting patterns and creating models.

3. The Political Economy

The modern democratic state is a creation of the West and bears the marks of its history. The development of Papal power over the European states in the eleventh century seems a unique phenomenon in history, which has radically affected the shape of the modern secular state. In 1075, Pope Gregory VII (ca 1021-1085, canonized as saint by Roman Catholic Church in 1606), in an attempt to reform the church caught up in the power politics of European feudal lords, asserted his power over emperor and princes, through his work on Dictates of the Pope. The Pope “may depose emperors”, and “the Pope is the only one whose feet are to be kissed by all princes.”

The system of papal control over princes was thus developed in Europe in the ensuing centuries; the Church laid claims to one third of the total land of Europe. Religious authority thus acquired civil as well as economic power, and also added military power, something quite unique in history it seems.

After the Protestant reformation or Revolt of the 16th century, Protestant princes refused to acknowledge this papal power. As Protestant and Catholic States began warring each other (Thirty Years' War. 1618-1648), the Peace of Westphalia was concluded in 1648. This treaty, the foundation of the pre-modern European State, affirmed the principle that the people of each state would follow the religion of their prince whether Catholic or Protestant (*cuius regio eius religio*). It seems the drafters of this treaty were the first to use the word "secularisation" in the sense of converting church property into public property.

The "secular state" as we now know it came into being as the result of a revolt against the *cuius regio eius religio* principle: this principle was found to be incompatible with the rising individualism of the 18th century bourgeoisie, since it denied the individual citizen the right to embrace a religion other than that of his Prince. The so-called "separation of church and state" thus banished religion from the public realm to that of private choice.

But religion is by nature public. There is no such thing as a private religion, though some religions can be secretly practised but always in groups. Religion cannot be individual, though some individuals try to create one's own private religion by serving oneself according to one's own taste from the cafeteria of the World's religions, each of which is public in itself.

The end result is twofold: On the one hand religion, even after legislative action to separate religion and politics, continues to play a major and often detrimental role in politics. We can see many concrete instances of this today: the moral majority in America, the Middle East problem, or the Irish question in Great Britain, the Hindu-Muslim-Sikh problem in India. The consequence of the Secular Principle: religion's role today in politics has become largely negative and destructive. Where it is used for vote-getting, it becomes a lamentable corruption of religion.

On the other hand, religion, driven away from the public realm to the marginal regions develops its own complexes. Denied its legitimate role in public life, it turns inward and becomes narrow minded and

fanatical. It develops a parallel authority structure and institutional power in conflict with other religious authority structures and sometimes even confronting the governmental authority structure itself. Its teaching becomes insular and unrelated to public life and the academy. Instead of being concerned with the whole of humanity, it becomes parochial and fights for the special privileges of its own followers.

Meanwhile the State and its institutions deprived of all spiritual guidance, can only mediate within the clash of group interests and resist or respond to pressure of powerful influence groups. It thus has very little energy left to look after the interests of the general public. There develops the modern political game, in which anything goes so long as some desired results are achieved. Governments keep vital information away from the public, give them false ideas as to what the real dangers are create artificial enemies, and tax the citizen unjustly in order to pay for the comforts and privileges of a few officials and politicians. In the name of rationality and the secular principle, the most evil forces gain power in the political economy. Justice withers away, integrity gradually disappears, human relations are governed by the crassest of motivations, morality disintegrates, peace fails to appear and the life environment becomes foul and life-destroying.

All in the name of the Secular Principle, humanity suffers ill health, bad education and dehumanizing social institutions.

III The Question Of Values So-Called

“Value” as moral word is a comparative newcomer to the western languages. It was taken over largely by phenomenologist philosophers, from the economic theory of the 19th century. Adam Smith, David Ricardo, and John Stuart Mill, among many others, were battling each other on the question of the source of value in the commodity market. Some preferred the labour theory of value which Marx later unthinkingly accepted, while others argued for cost of production or utility as the main determinant of value. Non-Marxist western economists largely gave up the effort to define value and preferred to talk of “price” rather than “value.”

In philosophy, Plato and Aristotle never talked about “value”; they preferred to talk of “virtue.” It was only the Neo-Kantians of the late 19th and the Phenomenologists of early 20th century Germany who began developing “value” as a semi-moral concept. R.H. Lotze (1817-1881) and Albrecht Ritschi (1822-1889), both Neo-Kantians teaching at Goettingen made the term value or Wert popular in Germany. Kant had proscribed the right of entry for Pure Reason to the realm of taste and value. The Neo-Kantians had to clarify the principles by which Practical Reason and judgement dealt with value or the good expressed in morality and aesthetics. Lotze's *Mikrokosmos* (1864) laid the foundation, on which others like C. Von Ehrenfels (system der Werttheorie, 1897-98). H. Muensterberg (*Philosophie der Werte*, 1908) built. Comprehensive studies of this development can be found in W. Stern, *Wertphilosophie*, 1924, N. Hartmann, *Ethik*, 1926, O. Krausis, *Die Werttheorien, Geschichte und Kritik*, 1937, and also in C. Bougle' L' Evolution des valeurs, 1922, as well as in R.B. Perry, *General Theory of Value*, 1926.

In English, H. Muensterberg's *The Eternal Values*, and W. M. Urban's *Valuation, Its Nature and Laws* both appeared in 1909. With Nietzsche's programme for “the transvaluation of all values”, the concept of value gained prominence in western thought.

In German and French philosophy, the Phenomenologists found that the “innate ideas” (noemata) latent in the human consciousness included not only mental objects, but also mental values. Max Scheler gave us a phenomenology of values in his *Der Formalismus in der Ethik und die materiale Wertethik*, 1913-16. Alexis Meinong developed this in his *Zur Grundlegung der allgemeinen Werttheorie*, 1923.

In the philosophy of science the neat distinction between “fact” and “value” began to come into prominence. Science (or Pure Reason, according to the Kantians and Neo-Kantians) being concerned only with fact and not with value. Value, for Meinong, was a function of desire, not of knowing. Others (pragmatists) spoke of value as that which would give satisfaction. Brand Blanshard would add satisfaction and fulfillment. The Language Analysts stayed away from giving any precise definition of value, but characteristically examined the

circumstances leading to people making value judgements. They also told us that “the ought”, which they dogmatically asserted, could never be derived from an “is.”

Science could not, by its very nature, deal with value. And since science somehow occupied the centre-stage of the theatre of learning in the west, value had no place either in the academy or in the school curriculum. Every attempt to get in by the window has proved unsuccessful. And those who think that science must always have the last word, will have to be satisfied with the judgement that while science can clarify some of the details of the circumstances in which moral issues arise, it itself shall not give any judgement as to what ought not to be.

The great cleavage between fact and value is a central feature of modern western civilisation. If we try to concede the legitimacy of that cleavage, and then seek to bring in values edgewise into a realm dominated by science, we are likely to face more and more frustration. The great cleavage is one of the creations of the “secular principle” and “presupposition-free modern science.”

Conclusion

There is one enormous reality distortion at the bottom of both the secular principle and the false claim of science to be pure and presuppositionless. It is the facile, adolescent, unthinking, and unscientific elimination of the Source and Ground of all being from the understanding of existents. It stems from the mistaken central principle of the European Enlightenment about humanity having attained its mundigkeit or maturity or adulthood, so that it, i.e. humanity, particularly the “enlightened” segment of it, can now proceed to take over the world through modern science/technology and the new secular political economy, without so much as a “by your leave” to its Creator and Sustainer. We should wonder whether “parricide” (killing of the father) is at the root of modern secular civilisation. Are we guilty of at least having attempted to kill our Father (God) in order to come into the inheritance of God’s world and to assert our adulthood and lordship over it?

Allowing the source and Ground of Being to take its proper place

at the beginning, at the end and at the centre of all understanding and all action and all creativity is an arduous task indeed. It calls for repentance on the part of those who have been guilty of hubris in the past. It calls for a new faith which makes us realise that the world is not our property, but belongs to God and depends on him for its existence as well as its welfare. This means we do not put our trust in our science and technology, or in our reason, but in God and his great goodness and mercy. Normally humans prefer to trust in themselves and not to depend on God. Our civilisation embodies that human attitude of rebellion and unbelief.

It calls for wisdom bringing in symbols of the Transcendent from all religions into the heart of culture. Political economy, education and healing, without thereby paving the way for a new domination of society by religious leadership.

One way to prevent a new domination of society by the clergy is to make sure that whatever role religion is now assigned, that role is not given to any one single religion. I think it is not for nothing that God allows many religions to flourish today. In a mono-religious culture there is no way to keep the clergy from dominating and misusing their powers. The multi-religious context will teach the leadership of the various religions to be more understanding and respectful toward each other and to learn from each other.

The context should be genuinely multi-religious; it should grant full freedom for those who prefer to adhere to secularism as their religion (for it is only by an act of faith that one can adhere to secularism); there is no reason for the clergy or the priestly class alone to represent the religions in policy-making. There is often more religious commitment as well as competence in the laity than in the clergy.

It is at this point that I would like to stress the potential creative role of women and younger people in the renewal of religion as well as of society. Personally I would like to see proportionate and balanced representation of men and women, older and younger people, articulate and creative children, voices of the underprivileged and the marginalised, intellectuals, experts and ordinary people, all participating in the reflective process and in the creative work of the pioneering institutions. The presence of the secularist can always be helpful in

challenging any of the too facile assertions likely to be made by representatives of religions, and also in counteracting the large scale ignorance of the clergy in many fields.

Yes, it is the participation of all the religions and secular people in democratic policymaking that we are talking about. It is new genuinely democratic constitutions for all nations and trans-national entities in which religion has its proper place that we are recommending. It is new sets of non-secular as well as secular medical, educational and civic institutions that we are envisaging. This will also mean that no religion would be allowed to monopolize the culture of a nation. The dominant religion whether it be Christian, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist or whatever will have to recognize other religions as equal partners and give them full democratic freedom to function.

In such a context there will be no artificial separation not only of religion and politics, but also of fact and value. Science will do its job according to its competence; society needs proper science and properly human technology; but the school and the academy will no longer be under the dictate of science and the secular principle. The context of culture will be multi-religious and not secular. The varied religions will themselves learn to create institutions which will promote the better, the more pro-human, side of all the religions and regulate the religions from straying into anti-human pursuits and activities.

The above is only an indication of the direction. Its worth and feasibility should be explored by you scientists, along with other people of goodwill, including religious thinkers and leaders. The first step would be to convoke a meeting of scientists and other savants including religious thinkers to reflect on this possibility of new multi-religious foundation for civilisation and its institutions.

The coming civilisation shift seems inevitable for the present one has proved unviable. Which way it will shift will be partly the doing of history, which still has many surprises in store for us, and partly related to our own wise planning and preparing. It is to that wise and informed planning, preparing and pioneering that I beg to invite you, wise men and women of the world, of you are genuinely concerned about the unity of the world on the foundation of enduring values.

(Star of the East, Vol. 14, No. 3 & 4, July, December 1992)

8

Education for a New Civilisation in the New Millennium

Introduction

Let me at the outset thank the organisers of this Ecumenical Assembly for their bold, timely, wise and insightful initiative in calling together such an assembly of Christian Colleges and Universities all over the world. The educational institutions run by Christians seem to be steadily losing their reputation, as they gradually fall, not only in standards of character and academic excellence, but more basic, in a Christian vision which inspires and empowers. As leadership passes, both in the Church and in Christian institutions, from men and women of vision and commitment to bureaucrats and fundraisers, the vision fades and everything becomes pedestrian and painfully prosaic. Christian higher education is a casualty to this process. The educational endeavour of Christians all over the world stand in need of total rethinking and radical renewal powered by a fresh vision; doctoring up the old ideas and prevailing structures will simply not do. I hope we can begin to see that vision here.

I am particularly privileged to be here, because I have pleasant memories of the not insignificant role I was asked to play, along with Fr. Mathias and Dr. Dickinson, in setting up what is now known as AIACHE, and to co-chair that most memorable inaugural Assembly of the Board of Christian Higher Education at Tambaram, Madras in December 1966. This seems to be the only genuinely ecumenical institution that has survived the tosses and turns in the climate of ecumenical cooperation in the last three decades. Credit goes to the more than two hundred Christian colleges of India, and to the leadership of people like Fr. Theo Mathias and Dr. Mani Jacob; I salute them and congratulate them for this new initiative on a global plane.

In what follows, my intention is not so much to please as to provoke; I am aware to the dangers in such an exercise. Frankness

can be easily misunderstood as rudeness; but then undue politeness may also do violence to the truth. So let me begin with some fundamental statements on which it is easier to agree; I note that many in my audience are more endowed on the administrative aspect of higher education than on the vision that should power it.

The first affirmation I have to make may seem some-what platitudinous. I have come to realise that educational reform is rather futile, unless it is an integral aspect of social reform. The idea that educational reform can precede social reform and can even engineer social change has proved to be largely a false assumption. I myself have learned to focus on social reform as the larger matrix in which educational reform has to seek its place.

A closely related second affirmation that I would like to make is that the present crisis in higher education is in the first place a cultural crisis, and cannot be fully understood except in terms of some cultural changes which have overtaken us in a scientific-technological, urban-industrial, liberal-capitalist civilisation.

Let me illustrate. Recently I was doing some reading for a paper on the ethics of genetic engineering in the sumptuous library of a prominent American University founded by Christians. When I got tired of a lot of dry technical stuff on the subject of my investigation, I turned for some diversion to a university catalogue that was lying by in the Reference section of the library. I was intrigued by the preponderance of courses on business management and money making. I decided to pull out from the shelves a catalogue from the university of the 1950's and make a comparative analysis, I saw that the trend was away from courses on human living together, on human cultural history, on humanist concerns in general. Of course there were the usual new courses on women's concerns and on the environment, which I welcomed. But the financial well being of the university seemed to depend on the large number of new courses on money making by trade, commerce and industry as well as by financial wizardry. This simply reflects the trend in society towards commercialisation and commoditisation of all values, and of education itself.

To me this is an advanced stage in the deterioration of human society, and consequently of higher education as well. I am reminded of the New Left fulmination of the student revolts of 1968 in California and France. I remember Daniel Cohn-Bendit's Marcusean thesis that the present urban industrial civilisation is totally dependent on the universities and other institutions of higher technical education which supplied the enormous fund of trained manpower needed to run that rotten society. The leader of the revolting French students was arguing that the easiest way to demolish that society and pave the way for the new, which would of course, by the inexorable laws of Marxist dialectics, arise spontaneously from the ashes of the old, was to destroy the University as such. And I remember that students in the University of California on their own, as well as the students at French Universities like Nanterre and Sorbonne in league with the trade unions, made a bold and temporarily successful effort to take over the universities and run them. Those were the roaring Sixties and the frustrations of that over-optimistic decade of the post-war baby boom younger generation seemed to have thrown a wet blanket over all aspirations of that generation for a new society.

Well as we stand at the threshold of a new millennium, some of those aspirations seem to be rekindled in the minds of many. Let me confess to you that I am very skeptical about the theme of this Conference: "Preparing the Humankind for the Next Millennium through Ecumenical Partnership in Higher Education." For a number of reasons. Quite apart from the clumsiness and awkward grammar of the formulation, the very assumption that we Christians can prepare Humanity for its task in the next millennium, smacks to me of rabid Christian cultural hubris. Equally fallacious is the assumption that it is higher education which is going to do that preparing. Higher education today is an entrenched vested interest within the structure of the old. It can neither transform society, nor even transform itself.

I remember again the famous Kothari Commission report of the Sixties on Reforming Higher Education in India. I have great respect for the two main creators of the report, Mr. Kothari, one of our most eminent scientists and humanists of that generation, and Mr. Jai Prakash Naik, a devoted Gandhian and a self-sacrificing servant of

the India. They were both good friends of mine. In the very opening pages of that report one finds however the strange contention that education should be regarded as an investment. The authors of that report probably meant that if we put more money and resources into education, that investment would bring in profits for the nation in terms of accelerated socio-economic development and overall increase in the Gross Domestic Product.

That may be true, but is there not a basic and unforgivable distortion in making the production of more commodities the driving purpose of education? The same philosophy is reflected in that odd name of the Indian Ministry of Government within which the educational concern is presently lodged - Ministry of Human Resource Development. Whose property are these “Human Resources?” Who disposes them for the “development” of who or what? Education and Culture, the main components of this Ministry - are they resources for someone or something else, or are they ends in themselves?

In that context I would like to introduce the main argument of my brief address this morning. The English words Education and Culture in their current sense are creations of the 18th century European Enlightenment, and embody in themselves some of the basic assumptions of that European Enlightenment, which shape the present global civilisation within which we are living. If we want to know what needs to be done about Education and Culture today we need a thorough examination of these assumptions, for which I have no time here. I have made an attempt in my last two books: “Enlightenment East and West” published by the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Shimla (1990) and in “A Light Too Bright - The Enlightenment Today” published by the State University of New York Press, Albany, New York.

In 1784, five years before the French Revolution, there was an interesting debate among prominent German philosophers in the pages of the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*. In the September 1784 issue of that wissenschaftliche journal, the famous Jewish philosopher Moses Mendelssohn wrote:

“The words Enlightenment, Culture and Education (Aufklaerung,

Kultur, Bildung) are still newcomers in our Language (German). They belong at present to the language of the elite (Baichersprache). The common people understand nothing of all this. Should this be taken to mean that the substance of it is still quite new to us? I do not think so... Education, Culture and Enlightenment, are modifications of social life, effects of the drives and desires of human beings to better their social existence.”

First we note that all words receive a new sense with the Industrial Revolution and the Bourgeois Enlightenment. Mendelssohn is right in saying that the substance of the three words are not new to the Europeans in the 18th century. But it is a fact that 18th century Europeans gave a totally new connotation to the three words. And it is that new 18th century European connotation that most of the educated people of today are familiar with, in any part of the world. We will refer to that new connotation in a moment.

Second we note that the three words Education, Culture and Enlightenment in their modern sense came into being jointly and simultaneously, as ideals to be pursued by the bourgeoisie, and to be kept away from the masses. Moses Mendelssohn in that article of September 1784 made the clear distinction between Human Enlightenment (Menschenaufklaerung) and citizens’ or Bourgeois Enlightenment (Buergheraufklaerung). The two are in conflict. If all are enlightened, who will do the dirty work? With enlightened workers how can the Industrial Revolution make any progress? One had to wait till Marx and Engels six decades later to hear about a Workers’ Enlightenment or Arbeiteraufklaerung.

Thirdly, there is no way of seeing a new vision on higher education in general or Christian higher education in particular without looking at the new meaning Europe gave to Education, Culture and Enlightenment in the 18th century.

The European Enlightenment

The concept of Enlightenment is a classical Indian concept, most clearly developed in the Buddhist tradition. It meant a new perspective on reality that comes about in the wake of years of discipline, prayer

and meditation, leading to the overcoming of all dualisms: subjective-objective, knower-known, humanity-world, matterconsciousness. It is samyag - sambodhi, the joyful resolution of all contradictions and conflicts, which puts an end to all questions, doubts and perplexities, as well as to all lust and greed and desire, which are at the root of suffering. It is the experience of the Person, the individual seeker as he overcomes all individualism, and realizes his/her unity with the whole of Reality. Basically it is ananda, pure joy and self-fulfilment through transcending the self.

Buddhist Enlightenment, like the modern Secular Enlightenment, was a reaction against the excesses of religion. BE ruled out, like the SE, all reference to God, as irrelevant to truth; both proscribed external authority, especially the authority of religion and scriptures, both emphasized self-reliance in making judgments and decision; both were opposed to ritual and dogma. There the similarities seem to end.

The difference between the two seem to be well reflected in the civilisations which they engendered. The Buddhist Enlightenment, which was also in a sense secular like the European one, did not separate “fact” and “value”; in fact it did not recognize something called “fact” existing independent of the observer. So it did not abstract something called “value” out of reality. The fact-value separation is the crux of both the secular and the so-called scientific.

There is growing perception today within modern science itself that it does not really produce knowledge of truth in the deeper sense, but yields only useful operational constructs. Christians are slow in understanding the implications of that perception. In fact it questions the truth-value of science as a whole, science which till a while ago claimed a monopoly on truth. Once we recognize this, we will learn that there is no way of reconstructing higher education without questioning the foundations of our civilisation; these foundations were generated by the European Enlightenment and its Grand Secular Heresy. I shall call them the EE and the GSH. The EE affirmed the autonomy and self-sufficiency of the Human, its freedom from all external authority, from religion and from tradition.

The GSH in turn reinforces this repudiation of external authority

and the enthronement of human reason as supreme. Modern Science flourished in this context and manifested its technological prowess that enabled the nuclear holocausts of Nagasaki and Hiroshima, huge engineering feats, and space travel to cap it. We were impressed by the achievements of science/technology and also in the process taken in for a while by its claims to a monopoly on all knowing and doing.

I wish to submit to you the thesis that there is no way to reconstruct higher education without exposing the false assumption of Modern Science, the European Enlightenment and the Grand Secular Heresy which audaciously proposed that we limit our attention to the world open to our senses. It is clear that the EE was wrong in its repudiation of all tradition and all transcendent reference in our knowledge. It is also clear that the GSH was wrong in marginalising, privatising and individualising religion, and in limiting our perspective of the material and the empirical. It is clear that Modern Science has led us astray in pretending to have a monopoly on true knowledge, relegating not only religion, but also art, literature and traditional perspectives on religion to the margin of the human consciousness and the academy.

If Christians have the guts to stand up to the Establishment, they should join with the followers of other religions like Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Taoism to challenge the secular assumptions of our civilisation and the European Enlightenment which engendered it. We should not be browbeaten by intellectuals, misdirected political leaders, who advocate and propagate secularism as an unquestionable dogma and a panacea for all our social ills. A Christian University which challenges the Grand Secular Heresy is likely to be mercilessly persecuted. But if Christians cannot risk some persecution for the sake of the truth, what authenticity can their faith have?

The Question of Culture

As I stated above, the European Enlightenment gave a new meaning to the word Culture. The same applies to its Indian equivalent, the Samskrita word *samskara*. Let us not forget that the very name of Samskrita language denotes the language of the cultured elite, as distinguished from Prakrita, the language of the *hoi polloi*.

But neither samskara nor Kultur nor even the English Culture carried the modern corporate anthropological sense of the term: a whole way of life of a people: practices, rituals, symbol systems, institutions, material artefacts, literary and religious texts, ideas, images and beliefs. It meant in its pre-Enlightenment use, cultivated refinement of the individual person in art, music, literature, philosophy, learning and skills - not a corporate ensemble of institutions, beliefs and symbol systems.

The European Enlightenment created the corporate concept of culture - because the Masters of the European Enlightenment wanted to keep the Enlightenment to the "Cultured Elite", the educated bourgeoisie, the gebildete Staende, the ausbildete Mensch. Education was the door to that Cultured Elite.

Our whole concept of modern education is tainted with the elitism of its origins in the European Enlightenment. For the bourgeoisie the contrast was not between the rich and the poor, but between the cultured and the uncultured. Higher education was especially conceived as the royal gateway for entry into the cultured elite; so was secondary education, the gymnasia meant for the children of the privileged.

Of course the early years of the European Enlightenment coincide with the Golden Age of German Culture - the 40 years from 1780 to 1820. Strangely enough this was a time when Germany was helplessly divided and politically powerless. At a time when West European powers in general were adventurously expanding into the world in a merciless and uncultured imperialist aggression, Germany chose to excel in Culture - in philosophy, music, literature and the arts - Kant (1724 -1804), Goethe (1749-1832), Schelling (1775-1804), Schleiermacher (1768-1834), Schopenhauer (1788-1860), Hegel (1770-1831), Herder (1744-1803), Novalis (1772-1801) and so on. It was that German Kultur that the educated classes were to imbibe, in order to be initiated into the privileged and enlightened class.

Marx and Engels, who came in the wake of the Golden Age of German Culture and Creativity, wanted to take Culture and Enlightenment away from the grip of the bourgeoisie, by introducing

the base-superstructure kind of edifice to reflect the nature of society. Culture was not the product of the elite, but of a social base where the workers, using science-technology as means of production and regulating the relations of production through the political economy, create the superstructure of thought and art, culture and enlightenment. Culture, as belonging to the Super-structure, was largely shaped by forces and relations operating at the base level, not by individual geniuses. The latter are created and sustained by the social forces.

For Marx-Engels, children of the European Enlightenment, Science was supreme; religion was an anachronism to be superseded, a hang-over from the feudal system. Scientific progress is the motor of society, an idea which Jawaharlal Nehru shared with them. Not only is ideology produced by comprehensive generalisations from science; even art is only “illustrative science” to be put at the service of the march of social progress. Marx suspected not only religion but also classical culture as an “opiate of the masses.” Culture was created by science and technology, a workers’ culture opposed to traditional humanistic culture. Based on that later leftists began talking about a “scientific culture”, a “scientific ethos” and a “scientific temper”, all of which Nehru and the Nehruvians simply adapted.

Marxism in this century, before its tragic collapse, adopted a more healthy view: “the harmonious integration of scientific, technical and humanitarian culture, the peculiarities and social functions of each being fully retained” (A Ya. Zis, “On the Question of the Correlation Between the Structures of Philosophical and Artistic Thought” in “Marxist-Leninist Thought Aesthetics and The Arts”, Progress Publishers, Moscow 1980, p. 118).

It was in 1959 that C. P. Snow, from an avowedly anti-Marxist perspective, sought to drive a wedge between “Two Cultures”, a so-called Science-based culture and a so-called Art-based one. That effort, despite the wide publicity it received for a few decades, has now fizzled out. We really cannot make that cutting apart of Arts and Science.

But a new vision in Christian higher education must take the problem of culture at greater depth. It is not sufficient to deal with

the “Emerging Agenda of Peace” - that is Caring for the Creation, Sustainable Development, Women’s Empowerment, Global Interdependence, North-South Co-operation, etc., all of which fall short of questioning the existing elitist European Enlightenment Culture.

One of the fundamental propositions I want to make here in relation to Culture and Higher Education is the simple observation that religion is integral to culture, and all the so-called cultural values of a secular society have religious roots. Apart from these two hundred years when the Grand Secular Heresy prevailed unchallenged culture, including European culture, has its matrix in religion - not just Judaism and Christianity, but also Gnosticism, the Mystery Religions, Neoplatonism, Byzantine and Slavonic religious heritages, and even Islam which catalysed the Second European Renaissance without which the European Enlightenment could probably not have occurred.

It is important therefore for the new Vision in Christian as well as other Higher Education to take some bold and imaginative steps to break the monolithic dominance of western culture in higher education. This is not simply a question of having a Department of Religions in each Christian college and teaching a few courses on Asian religions. The whole perspective of higher education at all levels has to shift from the secular mono-cultural to a multi-cultural, multi-religious (secularism can also be recognized as a dogmatic and unscientific religion among the others) basic perspective on reality.

One implication of the foregoing is that philosophy should find a new role in the University curriculum - not just “modern” philosophy, which is under constraint to repudiate all tradition and traditional or contemporary religions. It should be a philosophy which can help the students to ask some of the basic questions about the meaning of life, the nature of reality, the transcendent foundations of the manifest universe, fulfilment in life, the nature of our symbiosis with each other and with the universe in which (not outside which) we exist and so on. The university cannot ladle out ready-made answers to these questions. But it must help the student to ask these questions without embarrassment and to find their own personal answers.

But a philosophy which is dry, academic and unproductively

conceptual will not do the job. The university should enable cohesive religious communities to co-exist, interact and learn from the worship and practices of other religions and ideologies.

We cannot just bring back traditional religion in the university curriculum in the pre-Enlightenment form; not even the form in which religion is in the curriculum of many western and other universities. We cannot just reverse the process of secularisation and restore the pre-Enlightenment curriculum. I have not time here to dwell in detail about how religions in the plural are to be reintroduced in the university curriculum. At this point I can only say two absolute conditions: it cannot be just one religion, the religious context in the university should be as inclusively pluralist as possible. Secondly, it cannot be abstract or academic religion, reduced to so-called teachings or philosophies. It should be the interacting confluence of various religious communities committed to faithful practice of their religion.

Education

I need to bring this address to a conclusion. I will do so by throwing at you some aphorisms about what could happen in the next century and the next millennium.

1. It is clear that the modern state is a creation of the Enlightenment culture, and it will be folly to count on the state to bring about the necessary changes in education, higher or lower.

2. The modern state is not the shaper of tomorrow. As a socio-economic institution of common life, it is condemned to oblivion, sooner or later. There are new power units emerging; they are the larger units of economic production, corporations both national and trans-national; power is in their hands; they are predators, judging by the record of most of them. But it will be folly on the part of the common people to either ignore them or ostracize them as enemies. They have to be befriended without being ourselves captured and enslaved by them. The better side in them has to be

appealed to, despite initial frustration. They have to be made accountable to the general public and to do some creative and innovative experiments in higher education as well as in children's education.

3. It is unrealistic to expect most Churches to understand the nature of the problem and do the needful. But they are also national and transnational corporations, with some power, though run mostly by unimaginative and uncreative bureaucrats. But once the Christian people get the idea they can be the most powerful allies in the cause of creative educational reform. To this end a large number of seminars, international and inter-cultural as well as inter-religious, need to be held in various parts of the world to reflect deeply on the nature of God's calling on the Churches in the educational field - not to the existing ones, but to see the problems of Culture, of Science and the Secular and to devise new pioneering experiments. The best we can do here is to produce a document, or at least the framework for a basic document which can serve as a discussion starter for these seminars and consultations.

4. Schools, colleges and perhaps also universities, such as we have them now, are also products of European civilisation and are already on the verge of obsolescence, what with the ongoing Communication Revolution and all that. What we will soon have are educational communities connected by electronic devices, with all the attendant problems. The teacher and the professor will probably become less pivotal, as also the classroom, the lecture hall, the library, books and notebooks (except of course computer note-books). The fall in the level of conviviality will be substantial. With that new problems of human community could arise. Probably we can think of ways of crossing these bridges when we actually come to them.

5. Whatever we do, let us not confine reflections to just

a group of Christians, however brilliant they may be.
Let the inter-cultural, inter-religious pattern begin with
these consultations and seminars.

Well. I must thank you for your patient listening. I stand to correction where my thinking is wrong. You will help me at that point during these our days together. I plan to spend more time with you this week because I am passionately interested in the subject. But I am no expert. The great expert, Christ Our Lord is with us. It is the Spirit of God who can lead us into all truth. May God bless you all.

(Inaugural Speech at International Ecumenical Assembly on 16th January 1995)

A Perception on myself

Ten streams of social awareness which has shaped me as a person

Let me try here, to enumerate, without any attempt to be exhaustive, of at least ten streams which have merged into the stream of social awareness which has shaped me as a person.

(1) First I must identify in myself a strain of perceptionary habits which I can only call “the primal Vision” shared once by all so called primitive peoples of the world, and which I today associate with the tribal peoples of India - the Adivasis and the Girijans.

(2) At a second level, I find that I share in the Vedic consciousness - in my own feeble and imperfect way. I find the heart of the Vedic Consciousness in the concept of *Yajna* or *Yoga*, which to me is true *Yoga*. The concept of sacrifice is not to be moralistically or ritualistically misrepresented, though it has deep moral implications, and *Yajna* without ritual is to me inconceivable. The cosmic egg, the *brahmamda* needs to be held together, by *Yajna* or by a deep moving social rite of abandoning self - abandoning it by offering it to the source of all, to all humanity, and to all that exists. I find this Vedic rite consciousness central to my own Eastern Orthodox Christian tradition.

3. At a third level, as an Indian living in the 20th century, I find in myself a layer that responds to cosmic *Sakti*. I have no objection if you want to relate it to the so called pre Aryan or Dravidian religion. Or you can associate it with Saivism. What matters for me is my own perception of myself as an energy configuration system, dependent upon and drawing from the whole complex of energy systems in the cosmos - the energy of sun and moon, of galaxies and planetary systems, of ocean tides and gravitational fields, of electromagnetic and other yet unidentified force fields. I do not claim that this layer is unrelated to the first and second layers. But *Sakti* is not a matter of the intellect. It is a question of being in tune - to be

charged constantly from the enormously complex force-field that our universe is. And if I try conceptualise the universe merely as a mechanical system which is the object of my knowledge, I am bound to go wrong in my philosophical reasoning.

4. At a fourth level, I must recognise the Buddhist heritage as an important layer in my own identity. Not Buddhism as an intellectual system of four noble truths and the eightfold path, but Buddhism as true enlightenment (as distinct from the rational Enlightenment of the West), as true freedom - freedom from *Kama* and *Trsna* from the myriad passions that unceasingly flail the self and drive it to and fro, from the innumerable false perceptions of the good in the external world towards which I am almost irresistibly drawn, only to find that, an attainment, all imagined good turns out to be but as or trash. I find something deep in me responding to the best in Madhyamika philosophy, especially to Nagarjuna who has convinced me that “it is neither this nor that”, that empirical reality is neither false nor true, that everything is caused by “conditioned co-origination”, though I would like to include the very concept of *pratitya-samutpada* as an imperfect conceptual hold on something which can never be held in the intellectual grasp. Of course I tend to assimilate this concept to my own Eastern Orthodox Christian maxim of holding the Kataphatic (affirmative) and the apophatic (negative) in dialectical tension. But the Buddha and philosophers like Nagarjuna have clarified my perception of freedom, including freedom from the desire for a final conceptual grasp of reality. The doctrines of *Sunyata* and the irrationality of the concept of causality are other great Buddhist contributions to my own perception.

May I be permitted to enter a caveat at this point, The contemporary Indian philosophical tradition suffers from its failure to take the unorthodox Indian systems seriously. And if the light shining from Gautama and Mahavira have nothing to contribute to my seeing my way. I will be so much the poorer as an Indian. Indian philosophy is largely in Orthodox Brahmin hands, and it is natural that they would have inherited a built-in prejudice against the unorthodox Indian ways of thought. But the liberation of Indian philosophy today demands emancipation from these prejudices and a willingness to learn from

Nagarjuna just as much as from Sankara, from Mahavira just as much as from Ramanuja or Madhva.

After all, what single religion in history has had such impact on all of Asia as Buddhism? It is the one system of thought which led to “the Indianisation of China” and to the transformation of Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, Laos, Kampuchea, Vietnam, China, Japan and Korea.

The title of an address by Dr. Hu Shih at the Tercentenary Celebration of Harvard University in 1936. See his independence, Convergence and Borrowing Cambridge, Mass, 1937, cited by Kenneth Ch'en. The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism, Princeton, 1973, p. 3.

5. At the fifth level I find my own indebtedness to the Upanisadic - Vedantic perspective on reality. I find the quest for self-realisation by attaining to the one - in consciousness, beyond consciousness - as exhilarating and ennobling. And I mean more than a pedantic and dogmatic enslavement to the thought of one Lokacharya, be it Sankara, Ramanuja or Madhva, Ramakrishna or Pillai Lokacharya. It is a spiritual quest - not merely an intellectual enquiry. It is a discipline to become what one is.

But I want to pursue that quest in a manner not divorced from the compassion which the Buddha and the Christ have taught me. I do not want to separate my quest from my conviction that my fellow human beings should find food, shelter and clothing and be enabled to live a life worthy of human beings, in societies of peace and justice.

I will thus have to reinterpret the Upanisadic quest, in the light of my understanding of historical reality, which I cannot dismiss as mere *Vyavaharika* and therefore as unrelated to the *paramarthika*. I know that our colonial imperialist past, and our neo-colonial-imperialist present are very much a part of the reality, whether *Vyavaharika* or *paramarthika*, to which I must relate myself and within which I must find my Indian-human identity today.

Therefore my commitment to the Upanisadic quest for unity must ever remain in dialectical tension with my social concern. And in

relation to the latter point, none of the Lokacharyas, even Sri Aurobindo (is he formally a Lokacharya, not having written a Brahma Sutra - bhasya?), can be sufficient guide to understanding contemporary social reality and the way the quest for social justice impinges upon the quest for the One.

6. At the sixth level I perceive the early Greek impact on my Indian heritage. Already from the time of Ashoka, there seems to have been a free flow of ideas between the Greek and the Indian civilisations. The edicts of Asoka speak about his spiritual conquest of the "Greeks" in Bactria and Syria, Egypt and Macedonia. It is not idle to presume that the channels so opened for Buddhist monks and missionaries to travel to Central Asia, Europe and Africa were also used in reverse. The apocryphal Apollonius of Tyann reports the debate between Greek and Indian philosophers from a Greek rather than an Indian perspective. If Clement of Alexandria could speak of the Buddha. It is equally conceivable that Greek philosophy came to India through the Brahmins who are reported to be in Alexandria already in the first century, as well as by Greek travellers who visited the courts of Indian princes and conversed with Indian philosophers. I would even detect in this mutual intercourse which must have begun at least three or four centuries before our era, the beginnings of the common features we see in the Hellenic and the Indian traditions - common features like the disparagement of matter, the perception that the soul is a prisoner in the body, and the concept of the worlds that lie between our shadow world and the real world of the muktas, all these later developed in Greek Gnosticism.

I must recognise this early impact of Hellenic culture on the development of the Indian consciousness, for otherwise I would be in danger of presumptuously presuming that the Indian culture and philosophy developed in a total vacuum, untouched by so called foreign elements.

I shall not be diffident to recognise as the seventh element the impact of the semitic civilisation and religion on Indian culture throughout the centuries. And I am not speaking merely of Syrian Christianity in Kerala. I am speaking rather, of successive waves of

Jewish Christian and Muslim traders, immigrants, missionaries and conquerors, who had an impact on India already before the coming of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British in modern times. And this Semitic impact was by no means confined to maritime India. The North-West was particularly inundated with these influences, and what is today Afghanistan, Baluchistan, Pakistan, Kashmir and Punjab, have been deeply influenced, first by numerically not large but a till powerful Jewish immigrants who fled the successive persecutions of the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Greeks and the Romans in Palestine, and later the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem around 70 AD. The whole area from the Tigris to the Indus, once comprised in the State of Parthia, was deeply influenced by these Jewish immigrants, in whose wake came also Christians, either fleeing persecution or as in the case of the Persian Christian missionaries, spreading the message of Christ. There were undoubtedly large Christian colonies in the whole of North West India as well as along the coast - right up to Madras. The lack of sufficient research leaves the field free for speculation, but both Ramanuja and Madhva give evidence of reacting to the Semitic impact - at least after the tenth century. Was the impact of Christianity and Islam on the Indian tradition purely negative? One would have to be very naive to think so. Even in the 18th and 19th centuries when the confrontation was between Hinduism and a militant Western Christian culture, the impact was never purely negative. And in the 8th to 15th centuries when Christian and Muslim cultures confronted India's Buddhist, Jain and Hindu cultures, the impact led to fruitful new constructions and insights in Indian philosophy. Our research on pre-moghul interactions between Islamic civilization and Indian religions still remains quite sketchy.

8. I must briefly mention the Persian element as the eighth. We were very conscious of our debt to Persia in the 19th century. In the 20th we have come to forget it. The great leaders of the Indian Renaissance like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and the cultural elite of his time had a thorough grounding in Persian civilisation and culture. Iranian mysticism and the dualism of light and darkness have deeply penetrated the Indian soil, and are today part of my heritage. I cannot out of any false pride, deny what I owe to the Persian.

9. The ninth element can only be briefly mentioned - precisely because it is so recent and so well recognized. This is modern western secular civilisation with its institutions, ideals, concepts, ways of thinking and gathering knowledge, its most decisive elements being critical rationality and the empirical philosophy. We have been so monumentally inundated with this strange way of thinking, so that we are not yet unable to sum on up enough critical objectivity to assess what has happened to us in this process, and how much we take the norms and standards of this civilization for granted. There are so many strands in this impact, and I shall not try to even to list them in the short space available here. I simply believe that we have a double task in relation to this most recent impact on our consciousness. On the one hand we have to master the techniques of critical rationality more adequately, in order to reassess all our old perceptions and received traditions. On the other hand, we have to develop sufficient critical distance and objectivity, in order to discern the respective strengths and weaknesses, possibilities and limitations, of critical rationality itself. Here we must learn from Dilthey and Heidegger, from Adorno and Horkheimer, from Gadamer and Habermas, but we must also bring our own non-western critique to bear upon critical rationality as a method.

10. The tenth element which I must recognise as part of my heritage as an Indian comes from the thought of Marx and Engels, Lenin and later Marxist theoreticians. Whether we recognise it or not, the impact of Marxism is there on the Indian Consciousness - in our aspirations for social justice, for the dignity of the worker, for a society without exploitation and oppression, and for socialism in general. Our conscious reactions to Marxism may have been largely conditioned by the media, as well as by the anti-Marxist predilections of most of our intelligentsia. The tragedy of the matter is that even professing members of the communist parties have only a nodding acquaintance with the basic contours of communist strategy, but no profound schooling in its ideological niceties. The marxist impact on our society needs to be recognised and reassessed; but perhaps a deeper initiation into the profound subtleties of Marxism both as a tool for socio-politico-economic analysis and as an ideological map

for human action can help the Indian philosopher deeply rooted in our own traditions, to be both creative and communicative with the modern world.

I have listed these ten elements which I regard as basic to Indian identity and culture, in a some what random fashion. There may be other strands that I have failed to recognize. What I have listed could perhaps be regrouped in a different and more cogent pattern. This list is submitted only as a basic for discussion.

The main point however is this: only an Indian philosophy that has overcome the three alienations and takes fully in to account the various strands that go to make up our Indian culture and identity bids fair to make an impact on world philosophy.

Such an endeavour can hardly be a personal or individual effort. I know of no one who has in himself/herself the necessary equipment to cope with the whole range. In the nature of the case endeavour has to take the form of a corporate or group effort, with intermittent mutual discussion, through several years of sustained toil.

(An extract taken from an article titled, "Evaluation of Indian Philosophy in the context of world philosophy")

The Rishikesh appeal To All Nations and Peoples of the World

I. Our Experience

At the foothills of the lofty Himalayas, on the banks of the Holy River Ganges, in Vanaprastha Ashram of Rishikesh - a city hallowed by thousands of years of intense training of the human spirit by the Sages and Seers of India, we have met, at the World Congress of Spiritual Concord. We are more than two hundred humble pilgrims of the Spirit, from many lands and all climes, seeking the Light of the Transcendent, not just for ourselves, but for the whole human family.

In the seven days (December 6 to 12, 1993), we have refrained from analysis and discussion, to concentrate on prayer and meditation, on worship and adoration of the Transcendent, according to a dozen or so of our various religious and spiritual traditions of humanity. We have been refreshed and renewed by the Spirit; we have experienced the peace and joy of the Divine Presence; great Masters and Mistresses of the Spirit have shown us many ways of seeking the Divine Presence and drawing nourishment from it. We have received much inspiration and many insights; we have also gained some useful knowledge. We now want to share with you, in all humility, some of our insights, which to us are precious. We hope they are of some worth to others as well.

First of all, we are firmly convinced that our problems - whether growing injustice and persisting poverty, spreading militarism and wild terrorism, pervasive violence and ethnic conflict, the deterioration of the family, the disintegration of human values and the erosion of human moral responsibility, the marginalisation and powerlessness of ordinary people, the increase of incurable diseases like Cancer and AIDS, the disruption and pollution of the environment, perhaps even so-called 'natural' calamities like earthquakes and floods, typhoons and tornadoes - all these problems have one common root, namely a spiritual malaise that has gripped humanity. Socio-economic analysis

alone will not reveal this common malaise; it takes spiritual insight to recognize this spiritual dimension of human suffering today.

II. THE ECLIPSE OF THE TRANSCENDENT

We have sought to examine the nature of this pervasive malaise in our reflection and meditation. We see that something has happened to us as humanity, in the wake of the Industrial Revolution which commoditised human relations, and the European Enlightenment of the 18th and 19th centuries which repudiated the authority of all tradition and all religion. We call this the Eclipse of the Transcendent in the Life of Communities. It is a sad fact indeed that the Scientific - Technological, Urban - Industrial, Secular, Global Market, civilisation into which the whole of humanity is being progressively incorporated, is at its roots a godless civilisation.

The Transcendent plays no role whatsoever when scientists explain the origin and nature of the universe we inhabit. Whatever paradigm they use to perceive and express Reality, whether an unaccountable Big Bang or an automatic Continuous Creation, they seem to take for granted that such amazingly complex entities as the human brain, for example, have simply developed on their own, without any dependence on a Transcendent Power or Mind.

How we wish that the Transcendent could play a central role, in our civilisation's educational systems! Children are trained in our schools to gain the Impression that everything in Reality can be explained without reference to any Transcendent Consciousness. The Transcendent gets little or no recognition in our curricula. How different it would have been, if at least children could have been taught the truth common to all religions, that the manifest world has originated in, and is totally contingent upon, the Unmanifest, and drawn the consequences both for our actions and our understanding!

The situation is no different in the realm of medicine and healing. Modern medical science and medical education find it difficult to base their diagnosis and therapies on a richer concept of the human, and of the relation of the human to the cosmos and to the Transcendent. Medical theory as it developed in the 19th and 20th century took the human body as something distinct from the mind, a

self-contained unit, a closed system, which has no relation to society, environment, or the Transcendent. Healing is often regarded as the simple result of chemicals and drugs, or repair of parts of the body. The well attested role of prayer and spiritual power in healing is not officially recognized by most of the world's medical systems, though a few among the world's outstanding healers have in small groups around the world begun to explore wholistic healing. The great achievements of modern medicine may obscure the fact that its healing techniques have been developed in a period when the Transcendent was already in eclipse in advanced industrial countries.

Our physical and social sciences also function without any reference to the Transcendent. Politics and economics, as well as the functioning of the institutions of government, in our secular societies, have no way of incorporating into their theory and practice, the role of the Transcendent in the affairs of human beings.

The Eclipse of the Transcendent plays a devastating role in the area of human communication and information exchange. The public media and the commercial system together transform information too into a commodity, selling only those items with marketable value, withholding information from the public when such information would damage the interests of the commercial-financial establishment or of the government. Truth is a casualty in the streets; because the commitment of the media is more often to profit and power, than to the truth or to the Transcendent. Human communities choke on the polluted air of distorted truth. Governments have been known to deceive their own people by withholding important information. Common people have access, neither to truth nor to justice. Our newspapers and other media seek to give us the false impression that the most important news for humanity each morning is what some government leader did or said, or what new caper a political party is up to. The truly important human stories of courage and integrity, inspiring instances of high ethical conduct, the impressive spiritual exercises and achievements of groups or persons - these have no news value. This lopsided highlighting of the political distorts people's perspective about what really matters.

The fundamental malaise comes from the secular assumption that the world open to our senses and our instruments is the whole of reality; a basic refusal to recognize the cosmic and spiritual dimensions of our universe, dimensions which influence our lives deeply. To refuse to recognize the Transcendent is to become a prisoner of the secular and the finite. When the Transcendent is eclipsed, secular reality becomes a frighteningly confining prison house.

III. THE ETHICAL AND THE SPIRITUAL

Not all of us agree on the description of the cosmic and spiritual laws and powers, which govern our universe. Some think that the Transcendent Source and Ground of All directly governs the universe without any intermediaries. For many the rule of the Transcendent is most often exercised through various intermediary powers and agencies. We are all convinced, however, that the moral and spiritual laws of life are written in to the very structure of the universe, and that we violate these moral and spiritual laws only at grave peril to ourselves and to others.

But then these moral and spiritual laws or principles cannot be reduced to simple ethical laws. Ethics is a derivative discipline. All rules of ethical conduct have their differing roots in various spiritual and religious traditions. With roots in different spiritual traditions, culturally different groups can still come to an agreement, on some intermediate principles or ‘middle axioms’ like truthfulness, compassion, humility, unity of humanity, reverence for life and care for the environment which sustains life, justice, peace and so on. The fact that we have agreement across cultures on some middle axioms does not mean that we can simply ignore the spiritual and religious matrices within which the middle axioms were originally generated.

Middle Axioms eventually get worn out, and lose their sharpness and clarity, hackneyed by long and careless use. New socio-economic developments make the axioms obsolete. Fresh formulations of old axioms are demanded. People yearn for new embodiments of ancient values, such as Mahatma Gandhi was. It is only by going back to the original spiritual and religious roots that we can renew the axioms and seek fresh embodiments of the ancient good. That is why the

ethical should not be made totally independent; the spiritual and religious roots should be watered and kept alive.

IV. OUR HUMBLE APPEAL

From this Himalayan Retreat of Rishikesh we appeal to you therefore

a. that all those interested in the healing of humanity should renew themselves, not only ethically, but also in their cultural, religious and spiritual roots. Repentance has always to begin with ourselves. People in different parts of the world should all humbly wait in prayer and meditation for the Grace of the Transcendent, which alone can redeem us from the encircling gloom. We should therefore prepare ourselves by continued and disciplined cleansing of the darkness within ourselves through prayer and meditation, through worship and devotion, through regular spiritual practices, so that the light may dawn in ourselves and in the outside world.

b. We should also seek to cleanse our institutions and social structures, where evil in many forms has become rampant. This may seem too far beyond our ordinary human capacity. The controls of these decadent, yet powerful, institutions and structures seems so remote and so beyond human reach. But the power of the human spirit equips us to strive for what seems at first sight, unattainable. Institutions like the family, the school, the healing system and the system of information exchange can be fundamentally reformed, if a large enough group of deeply devoted and spiritually trained human beings can set their minds and spirits to it.

c. We should not allow ourselves to be intimidated by the regnant power of various forms of evil in the political economy. The political process in too many countries seems polluted by undemocratic factors like the use of money power or muscle power to force the democratic election process. Too many governments are linked to nefarious activities like the drug trade, the manufacture and trade of inhuman weapons of death and destruction, and the operation of clandestine mafiosi. Evil is always sly and camouflaged, at times pervasive and intimidating, sometimes armed to the teeth and menacingly aggressive. But we shall not, as children of the Spirit, fear evil. When a sufficient

number of people in each country are freed from their lethargy, fear and fatalism, and apply the power of the good fearlessly and creatively against evil, the fortress of evil will fall before the advancing power of the good. We shall not counter violence with violence or race hatred with race hatred. We shall strive by the power of the spirit and the spiritual force of the good, to break through the barriers that divide race against race, religion against religion, state against state. The faces behind the faceless power of corporate, institutionalised evil, like bribery, corruption, extortion, terrorism and so on should be exposed, not in violence or terror, rather by the gentle but firm power of goodness in action, developed through prayer and meditation. Our prayer and meditation should not, however be just for personal self-realization and fulfilment, but also for redeeming our states and other corporate or institutional structures from the power of evil. Only light can dispel the darkness.

d. We make our appeal to spiritual and religious leaders all over the world, to redeem religion from its marginalisation and privatisation by the secular culture, and to make religion a healing balm for the whole world and the whole human family, and not just for the followers of one's own religion. The teaching of each religion must be delivered from doctrinaire exclusivism and from narrow concern for its own followers. Factions among religions and religious leaders in too many situations have scandalized people and made religion itself an object for contempt. People are saddened when they see moral laxity and selfish struggles for power and prestige among religious leaders themselves. If the leaders do not practice what they preach, how can the people listen to their religious teachers with respect? One life that sheds peace and joy transforms more lives than a hundred speeches and admonitions. We have seen that here in Rishikesh. We appeal to all people to work for the spiritual renewal of all religious leadership, and to make places where the religions train their leadership more broad and open, free from parochialism and narrowness.

e. Our final appeal is to the United Nations. The charter of the United Nations is a major symbol of humanity's hope for a better, more peaceful and just, united world. Due to lack of vigilance the United Nations has allowed itself to captured by the power brokers

and people exploiters of the world. It mindlessly intervenes in conflicts, claiming to seek to resolve the conflict peacefully, but achieving only the establishment of near permanent foreign outposts for the armed forces of some nations. The United Nations must be democratised and made to serve the interests of humanity as a whole and not the narrow interests of some nations and large corporations. The Security Council should become a fully elected democratic body responsible to the community of nations. The General Assembly should become a bi-cameral body, with a House of States and a House of the People, the latter with elected representatives of the people of all regions. The UN should have a Spiritual Cell with highly evolved spiritual souls of all religions and cultures in it. Their job is to pray and meditate together, and seek healing for the whole of humanity. We should go beyond the obsolete concept of national sovereignty, and begin to lay the foundations for a Community of Nations, in which each nation not only would be responsible to the Community for its actions, but also dedicate its efforts to serve the whole of humanity and not just its own citizens. The funding of the UN should also be made democratic, each nation paying the same fixed percentage of its GDP of the previous year; in addition there should be a uniform tax on the previous year's defence expenditure of each nation. This should be, like the tax on tobacco and the alcohol, both a disincentive to spending on war and militarism, and a way of financing the United Nations democratically. The UN staff and personnel could, with some effort become more simple in their life-style, seeing their jobs as a great opportunity to serve humanity, and becoming living examples of the principle that human responsibilities are as important as human rights.

Finally we appeal humbly and earnestly to all our sisters and brothers in humanity, all over the world. Let us all intensify our discipline, and pray, worship, meditate, regularly for the healing of humanity! Let us teach prayer and meditation in our schools and hospitals in our jails and in the training centres of the police and the armed forces. Let us train vast armies of spiritual adepts committed to the welfare of the whole of humanity. Let us open meditation centres in the parks and public gardens, and in other serene and scenic spots. Let us start in every country and region multi-religious

International Academies for training people to be spiritual guides committed to the whole of humanity. Let us ask and achieve a period of quiet meditation for the personnel in every school and medical clinic, and every office and factory, in the centres of scientific research, in institutions for business management training, and also in the UN. Let us seek to improve the patterns of overall vibrations on our planet by generating new creative waves of spiritual energy. Let us create cross-professional networks of spiritual seekers and pilgrims all over the world. May this our humble appeal be read and pondered upon in all parts of the world. May it be improved upon by wiser souls, and bring vision and inspiration to many.

Let us all lift up our hearts in faith and hope to the Compassionate One, the Transcendent, the Merciful. May our constant care be for the healing of all humanity. Blessing and Grace will descend on our human race, and Peace with Justice and a healthy environment will come out of our prayerful and dedicated good efforts. We greet you all in the name of Peace and Joy, in the name of the Healing of Humanity. We send you our corporate blessings and warm good wishes. May Peace and Concord prevail!

Om shantih, shantih, shantih.

Rishikesh, Himalayas

December 12, 1993

**WORLD CONGRESS OF SPIRITUAL CONCORD.
Rishikesh, Himalayas, India, December, 6-12-1993 (Sponsored
by International Association of Peace Through Culture)**

Reshaping Health Care

The International Consultation on Medical Anthropology and Alternative Systems of Healing brought together some 50 healers and thinkers from various countries including USA, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, India, Oman and Tibet, for a consultation at the Hotel Raj Hans, Surajkund, Haryana (near New Delhi), India, from February 20th to 27th, 1995. The Consultation had four major objectives:

a. to make a preliminary assessment of the views of reality and perceptions of what constitutes a human person as implied or expressed in various healing systems developed by different cultures of the world. This, rather than any particular academic discipline is what was meant by the term “medical anthropology”;

b. a cursory examination of the development of modern western medicine, and of the reasons why more and more people are turning away from the western medical system of Allopathy and resorting to traditional healing systems or to Homeopathy for their health care needs;

c. an assessment of the state of Traditional Healing Systems and Homeopathy; and exploring ways and means to make the immense wealth of these rich traditions more easily and effectively accessible to people;

d. to suggest changes in existing patterns of health care and to make other suggestions and recommendations to governments, private sector enterprises related to healing, to the healing profession, to voluntary organisations and to the general public.

We had the benefit of a rich input in the form of presentations, demonstrations and discussions. The free consultation clinics in Ayurveda, Unani, Homeopathy, the Japanese system of Jorei, Naturopathy, Yoga, Tibetan Medicine, Russian Traditional medicine, Pranic Healing, High Genki, Acupressure and Massage techniques

were utilised by participants as well as by hundreds of visitors from Delhi and Haryana. Participants thus had an opportunity to observe the actual practise of Traditional Systems of Healing and Homeopathy, in addition to hearing some highly informative presentations on the various systems of Healing. They also saw how widespread was the public interested in these Traditional Healing Systems and Homeopathy.

We were graciously received by the great Sikh Guru and Healer, Baba Virsa Singhji Maharaj, and the hour we spent in his presence at the Gobind Sadan, Mehrauli, New Delhi, was itself a healing experience for most of us. Among many other precious insights which he gave us in that hour, Babaji also told us:

“If we see clearly, we can see that humans are the most poisonous of all creatures. ... When we hate or when anger and bitterness burns within us, we emit poison into the world and pollute it. ... When our thoughts are poisoning us, how can medicine help? When we purify our thoughts, when loving compassionate service motivates us, when we meditate deeply, not only our own bodies and spirits, but also the whole world will be cleansed, and people will be more healthy... If anger and hatred leave us, we can save millions on armaments as well.”

In his erudite inaugural address, the Government of India’s Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare, Dr. C. Silvera said,

“As a system Allopathy has its own plus points. But it has certain obvious pitfalls as well. The cost factor, non-availability to a vast majority of the people, hospital-induced illness, over-use of chemicals in pharmacopeia and prescriptions, indiscriminate use of antibiotics, the over-technologisation of both diagnosis and therapy, and consequent impersonalization of healing are some of these.”

The Minister announced that “very soon a separate Department for Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy will be created

under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.” This new Department will seek among other things:

(a) the upgrading of colleges for training personnel for Indian Systems of Medicine.

(b) the setting up of four drug testing laboratories for Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy.

(c) research revitalisation in these systems.

(d) exposing practitioners of these systems to the National Health Programme through three-week courses, and

(e) the setting up of at least one Specialised Hospital in each state, for the practice of these systems, on the lines of Allopathic hospitals.

The Minister continued to stress the drawbacks in the present situation, including the inadequate level of training administered in colleges for these systems, their insufficiently developed theoretical framework, practice by healers of substandard training, tonics and patent medicines not conforming to standard or even to the labels. He said:

“However, there is no gainsaying the fact that we need to enforce stricter standards than is presently the case. Let me assure you that this is an issue to which my Ministry will address itself with all seriousness.”

We were served a rich feast of knowledge and wisdom in the form of papers and presentations, including the Presidential address of the Co-Chairperson, Prof. R. M. Verma, former Director of the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurological Sciences, the incredibly rich keynote address by Prof. Srinath Reddy of the Department of Cardiology of The All India Institute of Medical Science, the thought-provoking addresses by Prof. Manmohan Singh of Southern Illinois University School of Medicine, the deep insights Prof. J. S. Neki, the leading Indian Guru of Psychiatry and Psychosomatic Medicine and many others. Leading intellectuals like Smt. Kapila Vatsyayan, Sri. Chaturvedi Badrinath, Prof. Anil Gupta

and others enriched the discussion by their responses to the main addresses.

Reality-Perception or Conceptual Structure

We saw that almost all traditional healing systems had their origin in a cultural milieu where religion had not been banished from the public arena to the margins of privatisation or individualism. In fact world view of most of these systems was deeply rooted in spiritual/religious perceptions of the universe and its transcendent origins; the human person was always an integral aspect of that cosmos, not a subject standing outside the world, trying to view it as an object.

The universal Aboriginal or Adivasi Culture in all continents, (Tribal, African, Native American, Siberian, Chinese or Indian) was one where humans felt close to earth and sky, to air and water to trees and animals - participating fully with them in the cosmic community. We of the urban-technological civilization would appear to have lost most of that sense of intimacy and community. In fact it is still there in our blood and in our genes, dormant, inactive, but not yet extinct; it needs only to be reawakened and rekindled. Appreciation and practice of Traditional Systems of Healing and Homeopathy will be easier in a culture which regains some of that Primal Vision of our ancestors, irrespective of where on the globe we live today.

When we come to the world's great religions, which have been the matrix of most of the traditional healing systems, we are struck by the fact that most of the world's religions, and therefore the traditional healing systems integral to them, are of Asian origin: East Asian, South Asian or West Asian: Taoism, Shintoism, Confucianism and Chinese Buddhism of East Asian provenance; Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism and Sikhism of South Asian origin; and Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam from West Asia, with a large contribution from Egypt in Africa and Greece in Europe.

All traditional healing systems, including the western traditional or Greek, operate within one more of these religions, sharing their world view, quite often transcending the limits of any one religion. Ayurveda in India for example predates the division of the Indian heritage into

Jain, Buddhist and Hindu; it takes eclectically from many philosophical systems - Sankhya, Nyaya-Vaiseshika, Jaina, Buddhist, according to need, but the relation to the Cosmos or the Transcendent is never obscured. Even the western or Greek system was never totally secular: Pythagoreanism - Platonism, the Orphic-Apollonian-Dionysian cults and other Mystery Religions were in the background of Hippocrates and Galen, Asclepiades and Alcibiades (most of the Greeks were from Asia Minor), Herophilus and Erasistratus. The Unani system is a typical case of Jewish-Greek-Christian-Muslim, confluence.

When we come to modern western medicine, there is a fundamental change in this outlook. There is a crisis in our health care system centered in Allopathy. This crisis is, in fact, a crisis of culture. Allopathy is a product of a particular culture and bears its marks.

The Evolution of Western culture and Western Medicine

Some understanding of the transition of Europe from the Medieval Christian (Roman Catholic) culture to the Modern Secular culture is necessary if we want to come to terms with what looks like an apparent conflict between Modern Western medicine on the one hand and Traditional Healing Systems and Homeopathy on the other.

Medieval Christendom (ca 800 to ca 1750) was, at least on the surface, a homogeneous religious culture, with the authority of the Church (after the Protestant Reformation of 1517 ff, of the Church and the Bible, but still of some form of western Christianity) ruling supreme at least in theory. Enormous socio-economic and anti-clerical conflicts simmered under the calm-looking surface of a society which had suddenly become affluent, through trade, piracy, colonialism and imperialism. The old structures of a feudal society were already coming apart at the seams, with the advance of the Industrial Revolution and the rise of the bourgeoisie as the newly dominant class replacing the feudal barons and nobles.

It was in this context that in 18th century Europe and later in America, a process called "Secularisation" spread, overthrowing the

control of the Church over property, ideas and institutions, including medical and educational institutions run by monks and priests - the 13th century medical schools in Salerno and Montpelier, Paris and Bologna, Padua and Leiden. Great theological-spiritual masters like the monk Roger Bacon and the Abbot Albertus Magnus (teacher of Thomas Aquinas) were also great physicians. Other great healers were attached to Popes and Kings. Secularisation took medicine away from the Church and the monks, and established the foundations of a medical system without conscious grounding in any religious world view.

The decisive event of this process was what we call the European Enlightenment, one of whose great symbols was the French Revolution in 1789 with its slogan of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, directed against the church's domination, inequality and paternalism. The European Enlightenment of the 18th and 19th centuries boldly asserted the freedom and autonomy of the individual, against the unfreedom and theonomy or heteronomy of religion and tradition. In pre-18th century European Christendom, religious notions like the Kingdom of God provided the basic framework for unifying all experience. This religious authority and tradition is what Secularisation and the Enlightenment totally and completely repudiated as an affront to the freedom and autonomy of the human person.

The unifying principle of all experience was no longer to be supplied by religion or tradition; human reason was its own authority over which the Enlightenment would acknowledge no higher authority. Human rationality was capable of grasping reality and transforming it to serve humanity's interests. It was in this milieu that modern science and technology were born; modern western medicine, based on science and technology, was also born in this matrix of repudiating all authority outside of human rationality, rejecting practically all agency except human agency. Science, the major instrument of human rationality, and technology as tool for human control of the world, together became now the unifying principle of experience. What was not knowable by the methods of science was not knowledge in this view. Everything that needs to be done can somehow be accomplished by technological know-how. Man is the Supreme Healer, knowing

and handling the human body like other objects, through modern science and the technology based on it.

This meant also the marginalisation of art, philosophy and religion as knowledge-gathering and communicating symbol systems. The new Positivist Philosophy, articulated by Auguste Comte, affirmed that all European knowledge, and therefore by extrapolation all human knowledge, has passed through three progressive stages of development: the theological-religious, the philosophical-metaphysical, and finally the scientific-positive. Only the last was true adult knowledge because it was not dependent on any external authority; the theological/religious belonged to the infancy of humanity; the philosophical/metaphysical belonged to humanity's adolescence. The adult, in order to affirm his/her own freedom and authority, must abandon what belonged to the child and the adolescent.

For western science, till recently, Traditional Systems of Healing belonged to that childhood or adolescence of humanity, and are to be assigned to the outer margins of civilised society, where people without modern education and scientific thinking, and therefore without the benefit of the European Enlightenment and its rationality, live-in non-western cultures, in the lower uneducated classes of western society, and so on. If anything in the Traditional Systems of Healing is to be accepted by adult, free human beings, they had to be tested on the anvil of scientific rationality and experimental validation.

We should acknowledge the fact that modern western medicine, even when based on the Cartesian-Mechanistic-Reductionist model, has enormous successes to its credit. It has liberated humanity, at least in some measure, from its fear of unknown and unknowable external or internal forces like superstition, fatalism, karma, and demonic agencies. It has overcome epidemics and contributed to longer life expectancy. Many diseases, previously thought incurable, have been brought under partial control.

Allopathy acknowledges, at least in theory, its origins in Hippocratic thought and practice. It has, however come to neglect some of the main themes of Hippocratic medicine: e.g. health as a state of balance, the importance of environmental influences, body-mind

interdependence, nature's inherent healing power. Instead it chose the Cartesian model, which is dualistic, reductionist and mechanistic. It separated body and mind, assigning the body to physicians and surgeons, and the mind to psychiatrists and psychoanalysts. It saw the body on the analogy of a machine composed of different parts, and attributed disease to organ dysfunctions or invasions by bacteria which had to be exterminated. Diagnosis and therapy were based on simplistic single cause explanation, leading to treatment of that single cause. This single cause-effect understanding was reinforced by developments in laboratory medicine and medical technology. The cost of treatment arose enormously as medical technology advanced. There was failure to recognize fully the inter-dependence of body-mind-environment, and to understand the human person as subsisting only in relation to various other subsystems which affected illness and wellness.

The system was tardy in recognising and nurturing the inherent healing powers in nature and in the human body. Excessive use of antibiotics led to unexpected consequences, like reduced resistance to disease, enfeeblement of the immune system and the rise of strains of new bacteria resistant to all known antibiotics and hence as lethal as AIDS. The pace of increasing sophistication and complexity in diagnostic technology not only raises health care costs to exorbitantly high levels, but also progressively marginalises the physician-patient interaction, so essential to health and healing. The proliferation of often unnecessary chemical drugs, combined with the overuse of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, food preservatives and detergents, increases toxicity in the human body and lowers the general health level of people. We note that in certain countries, some pharmaceutical companies, insurance companies and some medical professionals together constitute a highly exploitative and unjust "health business." These are factors that urgently call for remedy and rectification in western medicine.

At the same time there have been many positive developments in the theory and practice of modern western medicine. The growth of epidemiology as a discipline and public health as a service have led to a better recognition of the multifactorial and interactive approach to

illness and health, taking social, environmental and even cultural factors into account. The emphasis on preventive medicine, on community health delivery, and the “health for the millions” approach have helped broaden out the perceptions of western medicine into nutritional practices and environmental factors. The new emphasis on “life-style related diseases” helped the understanding of heart diseases, cancer, diabetes, mental illness and other stress related disorders. The role of diet, exercise and relaxation techniques is now better recognised. Socio-economic deprivation as a major contributor to ill-health, links health care today with the wider aspects of the political economy. The recent emergence of evolutionary epidemiology draws attention to the factor of cultural change and the consequent erosion of the protective practices of the old cultures as a major cause of ill-health and epidemics.

Technology itself has helped in the unravelling of the complex interplay of myriad interdependent systems in the body and in the world, from cell to cosmos, which keep a person healthy. Psychosomatic medicine and Psychoneuro immunology emerging as new inter-disciplinary systems of knowledge and the emergence of bio-feedback technology, have revealed how the mind and will affect the body through neurohumoral influences and by mental states.

There is a growing recognition of the role of faith and spirituality in health and healing. The power of prayer to heal is now well documented.

All these combine to initiate some radical changes in modern western medicine, bringing it closer to the reality perceptions of the Traditional Systems of Healing. There is a new paradigm emerging—one that integrates the physical, mental, environmental, social, and spiritual domains. Its articulation is progressing very slowly; the conception itself is still in evolution. Medical Anthropology, or our understanding of how the human person functions in relation to the rest of the universe, calls for clearer formulation, incorporating the role, not only of science, but also of art, philosophy and religion, in health and healing.

As this paradigm shift grows to maturity, we can expect a creative

regeneration in modern western medicine. This process will not take place independently of a better understanding of and co-operation with Traditional Systems of Healing; it will also facilitate that necessary understanding and co-operation in the interests of the health and well-being of the whole of humanity.

The Present and Future of Traditional Systems of Healing

It is by no means easy to produce an exhaustive list of the Traditional Systems of Healing. We want first to suggest that we abandon the use of the term “Alternative Systems of Healing”. It seems to imply that one system, namely Allopathy, is normative and the others are simply alternatives.

When we speak of “Traditional Systems of Healing” we mean the traditions of healing and health care of all cultures - of China and Japan, of India and Tibet, of the Arab World, of Europe and the Americas, of all of Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand. We should include Homeopathy, though it is rather modern in origin. We also include a plethora of newly emerging healing systems - e.g.; Pranic Healing, Jorei, High Genki, Reflexology, Magnetology, Chiropractic, Osteopathy, Cranio-Sacral Therapy and so on, all of which seem to have some roots in Ancient Traditions.

We note the growing recognition of TSH (Traditional Systems of Healing) by Allopathy, and the selective and partial incorporation of some of its techniques into Allopathic medicine as an adjunct to it. This is not what matters, however, from the perspective of the people’s health needs. We are convinced that the resuscitation and promotion of Traditional Systems in their own right is absolutely necessary for the welfare of humanity; we affirm that we cannot begin to meet the health needs of the whole of humanity without the aid of TSH.

The TSH have a claim for preferential treatment, because

- a. they are community based and have already a strong manpower base, which includes trained healers as well as local or tribal health practitioners;
- b. they rely primarily on local resources like flora, fauna and minerals;

- c. they are cost effective and within reach of ordinary people;
- d. the possibility for commercialisation and exploitation is much less in these systems compared to western medicine; though high vigilance is required to ensure that as the people's awareness of and demand for these systems go up, commercial establishment will certainly exploit them for profit;
- e. their side effects are much less, and properly controlled, they do less damage to humanity's health and well-being;
- f. they are well integrated with culture specific life styles, while generally being holistic in their approach to health care.

It is a fact however that TSH have been surviving for the past two hundred years on the margins of public life. The European Enlightenment and its secular civilizations banished them from the official public arena, along with all tradition and all religion. Allopathy which conformed to the standards of western science took over the centre of the public health care system.

No marginalised community can live and flourish normally; this is true for women, for Adivasis and Aborigines, for Blacks and Native Americans; it is true also for religion which has not done well in the past two hundred years as compared to earlier periods. Traditional Healing Systems were cast out, along with the religions which were their matrix.

Prolonged marginalisation distorts everything; TSH are no exception. The state gives primary attention to the Allopathic system, casting an occasional crumb from its sumptuous tables to the household pets of TSH. Their potential is not recognised or sufficiently utilised in primary health care or in hospitals and systems of training medical and paramedical personnel. With the waning of State recognition and support, some people lose confidence in their own healing traditions. Allopathic physicians and nurses, by virtue of their training school education, tend to look down on the practitioners of TSH. On the other hand there is a groundswell of new demand for these Traditional Systems on the part of people everywhere. Their respect for these systems is growing.

What should we do to bring these TSH back to life and help them fulfil their true function? First, we need to do certain things both for TSH and also for Allopathy:

- a. confirm and reaffirm what is good and should in these systems;
- b. remove what is distorted in systems and restore them to their original authenticity;
- c. complete what remains incomplete in the light of experience and new knowledge, especially by learning from one another.

A major problem in relation to TSH was that of standards for training practitioners and their licensing or accreditation. The traditional method in these systems is apprenticeship or *guru-sishya-parampara*, or handing over the knowledge from teacher to disciple, in a system where theory and practice are never separated. This system is difficult to practise on a large scale, when there is need for thousands of practitioners to bring health care to people.

Training in TSH therefore can be best achieved in small scale participatory teacher-student patterns in the setting of local cultures. However, large scale colleges for Ayurveda, Homeopathy, Unani, Siddha, Naturopathy, Yoga therapy, Chinese Medicine and other systems are already in existence. These institutions now seek to imitate the pattern of Allopathic medical schools; sometimes even the subjects and text books of Allopathy are utilised. The end result is major distortions in the authenticity of the TSH.

One thing we notice is that each system remains in isolation. The practitioner of one system knows very little about other systems. This defect should be remedied at the training stage itself, by short courses for exposure to other systems, preferably in the latter's clinics and institutions. The curriculum of Allopathic medical schools should definitely include such exposure to TSH. But the same has to be done in the training programme of each Traditional System as well.

Multisystem Healing Centres

We saw the need for culturally adapted multi-system healing centres in all countries and all regions of each country. Some of the

existing clinics and hospitals could incorporate more systems into their present structure. The multi-system centres could be designed in such a way that there is creative interaction between the various systems. A multi-system diagnostic team could screen each person coming for healing and assign a suitable programme of treatment in one or more systems, according to need and preference. It is desirable that large buildings are avoided, regimentation reduced to a minimum and convivial living conditions provided for all, preferably in open country, in sylvan settings where possible, plenty of gardens and open spaces provided, with flowing streams and winding lanes and clubs and cafes for creative interaction among patients and healers. Costs have to be kept as low as possible, so that ordinary people can benefit from them. State and private sector subsidies should be sought and utilised; especially to help the poor.

These centres can also play a central role in gathering information and establishing a data base about the efficacy, safety and cost of the various systems. They could besides serve as internship hospitals for trainees in various systems. In some cases these centres can also undertake or promote research in the various systems. They can also serve as referral centres for patients from other centres. Such centres can co-operate with other similar centres, so that each can learn from the other.

One question which seemed central is the extent to which the standards of modern science should be applied to the testing of Traditional Systems.

What Constitutes Valid Evidence for Efficacy and Safety of any System?

It is clear that all healing systems should be tested for their efficacy and safety. This applies to the Allopathic system as well. We were told of the Weinberg study, according to which only 20% of the cures effected in allopathy can be attributed to the treatment applied, 30% is placebo effect, 25% due to some form of catharsis, and the remaining 25% due to what is called the X-Factor, which may include faith and prayer. Whatever be the validity of this report, it is clear that strict laboratory evidence cannot be obtained for all these factors

involved in healing. In the case of all systems, whether Allopathy or Traditional, the following principle can guide our thinking about efficacy and safety.

1. All systems should be evaluated and assessed, in ways appropriate to each system, for their efficacy and safety, before they can be licensed or used in the public health care system.
2. The causal connection between the treatment and its beneficial outcome may not always be traceable accurately. This may be due to limits in our theoretical understanding or in our investigational tools. Our inability to trace the causal chain should not however lead to rejection of healing methods of proven efficacy.
3. Any evaluation process should give more importance to patient-relevant outcomes like survival, well-being, functional state, and self-care possibilities than to physician-relevant outcomes like clinical or laboratory indicators. Pre-treatment and post-well being measurements of measurable aspects should also be gathered and studied wherever possible.
4. Documentation should include cases of success in treatment as well as of failure and fatalities.
5. Comparative clinical trials may in some cases be used to test the efficacy of various systems.
6. Comparative cost-effectiveness assessments should also be used in testing usability of various systems.
7. Careful documentation about experiences of groups of persons could also be studied to supplement the assessment of various systems.
8. The internal criteria of one system cannot be applied in the assessment of other systems.

Recommendations

We address our modest suggestions and recommendations to governments, intergovernmental bodies, to voluntary agencies and

international non-governmental agencies, to Corporations and Insurance companies, to professional healers, to the general public to the communications media.

To National Governments

1. Many governments recognize only a few selected Traditional Systems of Healing for support and promotion; we recommend that they should seek to be as inclusive as possible, and not to neglect the scores of systems now coming back to life, including traditional Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan, Native American and Indian systems, as well as the newly emerging systems like Craniosacral Therapy, Macrobiotics, Reflexology, Magnetology and so on. Governments directly or through other public bodies should evaluate and assess by appropriate methods the efficacy and safety of all systems, and take into consideration their easy availability to people as well as cost factors.

2. In setting up or supporting high quality training centres for the various systems, special attention should be given to the culture-specific ambiance of each system. Most traditional systems do better in small scale settings and rural conditions. Since their future participation in nation-wide health programmes is in view, the urban setting is often uncongenial.

3. Governments should promote or establish testing facilities and centres appropriate to each system for the continuing monitoring of quality and standards of pharmaceuticals and other medical products in traditional systems. No product should be sold in the market without certification of quality.

4. Governments should set up or promote high quality multisystem healing centres, where there is co-ordination and continuous interaction among the various systems. These new institutions should be centres of comparative study, of multi-system treatment, evaluation, standard-setting for accreditation, documentation and research, for Traditional Systems of Healing, Homeopathy and Emerging New Systems.

5. Governments should fund and promote research in Traditional

Systems of Healing, using also the multi-system centres and testing facilities. Research in TSH, when attached to Allopathy dominated institutions should not remain at the margins of the programme of such institutes, but should promote continuous interaction among TSH and Allopathy.

6. Governments should legislate for proper monitoring of TSH products and for the licensing and registration of TSH practitioners. Norms of training and qualification should be established and strictly implemented, suitably disciplining violators and malpractitioners. Governments should also pass and enforce appropriate legislation to regulate the large scale export of the herbal resources of the country.

To the World Health Organisation and Other UN Agencies

1. WHO should initiate effective programmes for the comparative study and assessment of the world-wide use of Traditional Systems of Healing, Homeopathy and Emerging New Therapies, which are all already playing a major role in the health care of the people.

2. WHO should support the setting up of a World Association of Traditional Healers, on the patterns of the existing CIOMS which brings together national health associations. To this end the WHO should encourage member governments who have not already done so, to set up national associations of traditional healers in each country.

3. Other UN agencies like UNICEF, UNDP etc should take into account the role of Traditional Systems of Healing in supporting development programmes and projects, and especially in caring for the health of infants and mothers.

4. WHO should take initiatives to promote creative interaction between Allopathy and Traditional Healing Systems, as well as to promote the recognition and use of TSH in all countries in order to fulfil its own commitment to "Health for the Millions by the Year 2000" (Alma Ata Declaration, 1978).

To the General Public, and Especially to Voluntary Agencies and Non government Organisations

1. High Priority should be given to awareness building among the

general public, first about the basic factors contributing to human health and well-being (Health Awareness Programmes), and secondly about the existence, efficacy and availability at low cost of Traditional Systems of Healing.

2. Every effort should be made for maximising the use of TSH in primary health care and in urban and rural health delivery systems.

3. Support should be given for the starting of multi-system healing centres in urban and rural areas.

4. A meeting of all voluntary organisations and NGOs working in the field of health should be convoked to consider ways and means of promoting TSH.

5. Take initiatives for setting up international and national non-governmental bodies to promote TSH, and for the networking of practitioners.

6. There is urgent need for a manual of Traditional Systems of Healing, homeopathy and Emerging New Systems, with brief introductions to some 20 of the most important systems (about 20-25 pages for each discipline) among these, choosing those with proven efficacy, easy availability and low cost. The essays must be competently written by experts in each field, with a view to being used as a text book in all institutions of medical training, allopathic, traditional or new. Perhaps a two volume edition, affordable, should be made available also to the general public.

To Corporations, Insurance Companies and others

1. We recognised the fact that economic power to effect some of these measures was not primarily in the hands of governmental bodies. We saw the positive role that private sector corporations could play in promoting universal health care, making maximum use of Traditional Systems of Healing, Homeopathy, and the Newly Emerging Systems of Healing. Their economic power and organizational resources should be optimally used to promote TSH. This is particularly so, in the context of increasing privatisation of medicine and healing and the entry of corporations into large scale manufacturing and marketing of pharmaceuticals for TSH.

2. We felt the need for the corporations, in consultation with public interest bodies and persons, formulating a code of conduct to be observed by all private sector enterprises in the field of health and healing. Such a code should give priority to the interests of the public and only secondarily to the conventional private sector interest of profit and power. The corporations should pledge themselves not to engage in the manufacture or marketing of any product or service harmful to the health and well being of the people, or beyond the means of ordinary people.

3. The corporations should jointly or individually set up endowments, funds and foundations for promoting Traditional Systems of Healing, Homeopathy and Emerging New Therapies and for maximising their use in the health care of the common people. This would be in the interest of Health Insurance companies in all lands as the use of TSH will substantially reduce morbidity and mortality. They should set aside and wisely use funds for setting up multisystem centres of healing research and documentation.

4. The corporations should take special care to see that the natural herbal resources of countries are not depleted or destroyed by over-exploitation. They should make it a point to ensure that for every herbal plant plucked up two are immediately planted, as is done in afforestation programmes.

To the Media - Print, Electronic and Other

1. Health for all is just as important as Food and Clothing for All, or as part of the movement for a Sustainable Life Environment, and for Peace, Justice, Freedom and Dignity for All. A workable programme for ensuring Health for All must necessarily include the renewal and full utilisation of Traditional Systems of Healing, Homeopathy and the Newly Emerging Therapies. We appeal to all media to intensify their efforts to promote public awareness of these systems and to disseminate accurate information about them. We make a special appeal to local languages media to highlight these systems and their capacity to prevent illness and promote health.

2. We appeal especially to teachers, doctors, literary writers, actors, poets, painters, musicians, dancers and other artists to help in the

dissemination of knowledge about the basic principle of health, and to fulfil the potential role of all media in creating greater awareness about the possibilities and advantages of TSH.

3. We welcome projects to start global media channels and networks which specialize, on a non-profit, non-commercial basis, in promoting information on Transcultural Health Care, projecting particularly some of the essential sub-cultural aspects of TSH, and drawing special attention also to the spiritual aspects of health and healing.

4. The Media should promote debate and discussion to bring about better mutual understanding between western medicine and TSH, and to dispel prevailing ignorance and wrong notions.

5. As multi-system healing centres develop all over the world, the media should promote awareness about these centres as a significant move in advance towards Health for All.

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